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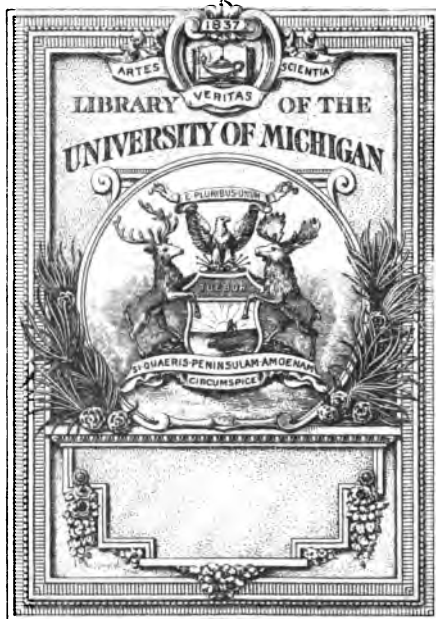
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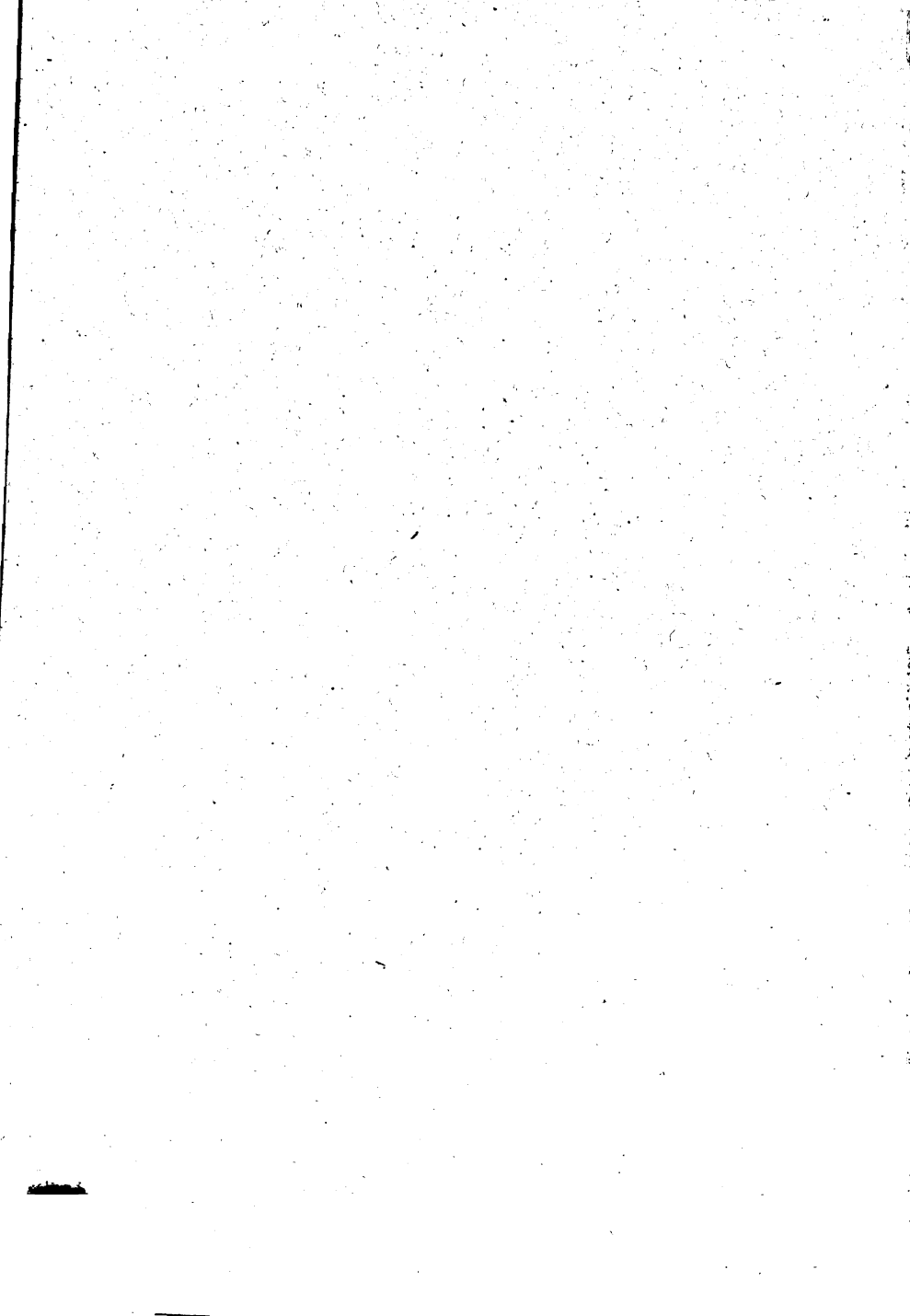
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THE REGENERATION OF THE UNITED STATES

A FORECAST OF ITS INDUSTRIAL
EVOLUTION

95215

BY

WILLIAM MORTON GRINNELL

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PREFACE

A NOBLE pride in the heroic achievements of their forefathers in the creation of the greatest nation in the history of the world is common to all Americans. A diffidence of the present is equally so with those who reflect on the dangers, faults, and tendencies of the times, while hope and confidence in the future rise and fall with the prosperity of the people and the optimism of the individual.

It is not uninteresting, nor is it unprofitable, to dwell upon the problems of the present, the tendencies of the age. During the past six decades the world has undergone more momentous changes than in hundreds, nay thousands, of centuries previous, changes which in the main are vast improvements in the moral and mental development of mankind, and, of course, in all that relates to material welfare.

Is the tendency to consolidate, universal

in all phases of life, being carried too far? Its advantages are immense and far-reaching, but many disadvantages are apparent. Life is a compromise, and we must be satisfied with the greatest good to the greatest number, and lessen the hardships as best we may. The transition stage is naturally the most productive of suffering, which is unavoidable in the present, and for some time to come.

The greatest danger, and it is a very great one, appears to be the suppression of individualism. By this our country was founded; by this it has become the foremost nation in the world. If, however, the maintenance of this is compatible with concentration, consolidation,—all that makes for economy, precision, and perfection in work,—social and economic life will approach complete and harmonious adjustment. This I have endeavored to indicate in broad outline, and rough analysis.

W. M. G.

October, 1899.

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THE REGENERATION OF THE UNITED STATES

CHAPTER I

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLONIES

THE early history of the colonies, in the main founded by Great Britain, scattered along the Atlantic seaboard, was one of incessant hardship, struggle, and death. The immigrants left their own country, not from lust of gain, but to seek the political and religious freedom which were denied them at home. They came not alone from England, but from Holland, from France, and from Sweden. They sought not treasure, but independence; they found not ease but hardship, privation instead of comfort, with danger and death on every hand.

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They left their comfortable homes, their genial firesides, oftentimes an easy and cultivated life. They bade adieu to the ties and associations of many generations, to all that renders life happy, and boldly sought, in defence of a principle and an idea, new homes in the wilderness, unknown, unexplored, tenanted only by savage beasts and more savage men, where even nature was stern, and where their new existence was to be one of incessant toil and ever-present danger.

This they did voluntarily, with nothing to anticipate but the liberty and freedom they prized so much and for which they were sacrificing everything; in labor struggling onward, oftentimes through the valley of the shadow of death.

They formed the *elite* of the race. The idle and the shiftless would never make such sacrifices, but only those whose principles raised them above material considerations, above suffering, hardship, and peril.

During the seventeenth century they came, animated for the most part with the

same lofty motives, to a new country with its pristine wilderness, its rocks and wastes, its impenetrable forests, sometimes alone, usually with their families, and in little colonies, bringing such modest equipment as they had, a few implements of agriculture, and always a few books; armed with a stern resolve and an indomitable will, which enabled them to conquer everything and to found so great a race. While the country was nominally under the dominion of England, the unknown and inhospitable regions were practically ignored and the early colonies were left to fight the stern battle of life unaided, if also unvexed by the tyranny which they had found so irksome at home. They formed their little governments, free to an extent undreamed of before—theocracies where religion was the dominating factor and the ministers of religion the real governors. In the intensity of their hatred of the Catholic faith, and in a less degree of the Church of England, they went to extremes and preached and practised an austerity that banished all that was easy and graceful in

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life. They necessarily became intolerant, and the more liberal of their number and the later immigrants were forced to seek, farther in the wilderness or in the more hospitable Southern settlements, a kindlier life and more liberal principles. Nevertheless there was room enough for all, however they might differ in religion or politics, so that little colonies spread and scattered themselves along the vast seaboard from Canada on the north to Florida on the south. Mostly emigrants from the maritime nations of Europe, they instinctively clung to the sea and communication with their homes, which they never forgot. They followed its windings and reluctantly lost sight of its resounding surge. We can scarcely conceive of all they suffered, all they endured, of the wrecked lives, the premature deaths. We only see in the neglected and forgotten tombstones of the seaside villages of New England and the South the incessant records of death, not of the old or middle aged but of the young—child after child from the numerous families which they brought up. These

mute rolls can only suggest the sufferings, previous and subsequent to their never-ceasing struggle, the long line of fatalities, the incessant combat with nature, with savage men and wild beasts, the misery and despair, the blasted hopes, the loneliness and sorrow. It was a century of woe preceding the birth of the greatest of nations.

But through this long and interminable period of suffering and death the desired end was finally achieved. The country was opened up ; free government, free religion were secured ; farms were scattered and dotted along the length of the coast line and for some distance inland. It was no longer savage, unknown, and rebellious, but cultivated and full of industry ; thriving with the beginnings of prosperity, holding out the promise of greater things, and peopled by a hardy, industrious, and rapidly growing race. Agriculture was supplemented by trade ; and commerce, foreign and domestic, constantly grew. Well-being was almost universal and prosperity general. The

development in the North and South was necessarily different. In the former, where the prosperity was built on the surer foundations of agriculture, fisheries, and overland and oversea trade, it came gradually and as the result of hard labor. In the South, where the climate was genial and the soil rich, the conditions of life were more easy. Little inclined to labor themselves, the Southern colonists soon imported slaves and indentured servants. The great staples, tobacco, rice, and later cotton, were cultivated, and most successfully, by slave labor, so that prosperity and wealth came early and easily—but only to the few, the ruling white race.

The less desirable immigration, gradually becoming larger, tended to the South, where the conditions of life were much more easy. It was composed not of the hardy pioneers seeking an abstract principle, the right of thinking and of doing what they chose, but of the idle, worthless, and shiftless, the malefactors, the convicts, who naturally sought the section where life was easier and where the possession of

a negro or two absolved them from so much labor.

The country had thus attained a considerable degree of advancement and well-being when the so-called French War broke out. This was a continuance of the Seven Years' War waged so fiercely in Europe, and in which England devoted her energies to the western hemisphere, while France, neglecting this, spent all her resources on the struggle in Europe. The war was to England the question of the balance of power in Europe, but with her proverbially keen foresight she saw her easiest success and greatest advantages in the New World. The colonists bore the brunt of the fight, the suffering and danger. England, however, supported them with money, trained leaders, and ships, and the result was the nominal victory of England, the particular victory of the colonists, while the definite establishment of the Anglo-Saxon race was assured on the continent of America.

When, toward the close of the century, Great Britain having necessarily studied

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and learned much of her new possessions during the last war, realized that here was the nucleus for a rich and flourishing nation, she devoted a considerable degree of attention, not to its wants, but to the possibility of deriving a benefit, pecuniary and otherwise, from these communities so long neglected. While this seemed eminently natural and practical to her, the colonists, who had derived no advantage whatever from their connection with the mother country, but on the contrary had suffered in many ways, aside from habitual neglect, resisted the attempts at excessive taxation. Loyal by nature, peace-loving, and industrious, they were willing to give voluntary and, considering their means, liberal contributions to the home government; but they had not suffered and endured for generations for the sake of freedom and liberty, to submit to arbitrary taxation without representation. Their moderate requests and remonstrances were ignored or arrogantly denied, and when, after years of patience and efforts at conciliation, the obstinacy

and tyranny of the little oligarchy ruling England had become too great, they determined to revolt. This decision was reluctantly arrived at and at first was advocated by a small majority. Even when the memorable Declaration of Independence was promulgated there was a very strong party, perhaps half of the colonists, who were opposed to what they considered so radical a measure. It was even more momentous than they had any idea of. It was the gauntlet thrown down not at England but at the World. They had proclaimed the freedom and equality of man, and stood arrayed against the conservatism and the organized systems of government of all Europe.

The war which ensued, was long and bitter, and involved the Americans in untold hardship and difficulty. With no army, no navy, no money; divided at home, they fought against the wealthiest and one of the most powerful nations of the world. Their resources, while very great, were not adapted for war, and only their heroic endurance, and the genius

and patience of their great leader, Washington, enabled them to continue the struggle for so long. Even then if it had not been for the moral support of the French people, and soon after by the most valuable aid in men and money, it is doubtful if they would have at that time maintained the independence which they so boldly proclaimed; but their long endurance, their patient courage, and the timely assistance of their great ally enabled them to achieve one of the most memorable victories in the history of the world.

The Thirteen Colonies, diverse in habits and customs, jealous of one another, emerged from the war a united nation; loosely joined together indeed, but in the main with the same ideas, the same principles, the same hopes. They had achieved independence and the independence was real, fundamental, and genuine. They set about constructing a government strong and effective as against the world and yet preserving the liberties of the separate commonwealths. The tendency was naturally towards centralization, as

the evils of the powerless Continental Congress and the contrasted interests of the several colonies had proved so unfortunate and provocative of disaster during the war. But the more far-seeing minds prevented the nation from running to the other extreme, and a Constitution was established and a government formed which were the admiration of the world. Theoretically they were perfect, and in practice, with a very few modifications, enabled the nation to rise from simply scattered communities into the greatest of all the world powers.

CHAPTER II

THE GENESIS OF THE NATION

THROUGHOUT the extent of the colonies, the country had been partially cleared, and the great areas of cultivation were more than sufficient to supply all the wants of the people. Manufactories had arisen, commerce interrupted by the war was rapidly rising again, and the internal development of the country was carried on with the utmost energy and rapidity. Vast tracts were reclaimed, the Western regions explored and gradually settled, and homes were ready at hand for the immigrants who were arriving in ever-increasing numbers. The people had the greatest of all blessings—*independence*. Work was to be had for every one, the necessities of life were obtainable by all, and the older families enjoyed an ease and comfort and even a relative

affluence which enabled them to devote themselves to the study of government and the cultivation of literature and art. There were few rich men ; there were no beggars. Wealth was evenly distributed. Poverty was no bar to consideration and success, whether political or social. The people still retained the respect for family inherited from their ancestors of the Old World, but in a somewhat modified form. There was an even greater respect for learning and ability, and when, as was so frequently and naturally the case, these were united with family distinction and achievements, the possessors of these qualifications and acquired advantages were usually chosen for representatives, rulers, and governors. It thus happened that during the Revolution and for half a century or more succeeding, the representatives of the people and the rulers of the nation were generally chosen from the more prominent and distinguished families ; or where exception was made in this it was in favor of conspicuous ability. The level of education and talent, as well as integrity,

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was consequently far higher than it was for a century subsequent, and was probably unsurpassed in the annals of any nation. Certainly from the Revolution down to the middle of the nineteenth century no nation had such brilliant and distinguished men in government service as had the United States. Politics, as the word was later understood and known, did not exist. Money was no factor in public life. Machine organization was practically unknown. Official life was singularly pure, and even when distorted and degraded from its lofty purpose the incentive was ambition or emulation rather than greed for money.

The nation grew and developed gradually and steadily in numbers, in prosperity and wealth, taking its rank as the youngest but not the least powerful of the civilized peoples. Its successful assertion of the principles of liberty spread its fame throughout the world and appealed to the liberal and independent spirits wherever they existed; while its material prosperity and great possibilities

attracted men whose motives in life were less elevated.

The conditions were now gradually becoming different. Each generation found life easier ; nature was being rapidly and steadily subdued. There was little to contend against, little to fight for. Comfort and well-being followed upon ordinary industry and the later settlers and the newer arrivals profited by the long and painful struggles and triumphant achievements of the earlier colonists. The settlements in the country extended still but a little way from the sea or great rivers. The West was practically unpeopled, and offered a virgin soil for the endeavor of every ambitious settler. The purchase of Louisiana had opened up a limitless field to the Americans, and as the East became more thickly populated thither the emigration naturally tended. Indeed not so much the immigrants from Europe as the sons of the old Eastern colonists, the younger and more adventurous of the families, sought for an easier and quicker return in the new territories. So while

the well-to-do class or moneyed interests, such as they were then, remained in the East, the hardy and ambitious men with no endowment but courage, perseverance, purpose, and brains, wandered to the unexplored West. The immigration from Europe was perhaps more inclined to remain in the larger settlements of the East.

Absence of social restriction and infinite possibilities offered in the new country attracted those who, through misfortune or their own ill-doing, had been debarred from their natural circles at home, and brought over a large number of undesirable people. These at first had no association and no interest in the country further than the material advantages which they might derive from it. The contact, however, with the better elements, the higher standards and aims, the conservatism born of prosperity, usually redeemed their character, or, if not theirs, that of their children; who imbibed the principles which actuated the older settlers and became worthy citizens of the new and great Republic.

The development of industry, the accumulation of wealth, the great impulse given to trade and commerce by the application of steam, the limitless fields for speculation in the building of railways, the increase of manufactures, the new inventions in all kinds, all operated to inaugurate radical changes in the moral tone of the nation.

Money was becoming a power in life hitherto unknown. Formerly it had been scarcely a factor in its existence. What the country did not produce was imported from abroad and paid for with some of the abundant home staples. It was now becoming the sole object and aim of men's lives. Wherever its insidious power penetrated the better life of the people suffered. It began to corrupt politics, economic, social, and moral life. It destroyed the old practical equality which existed among all classes and it differentiated those who had it in abundance from those who had small means of sustenance.

The close of the Mexican War and the

discovery of gold in California inaugurated a period of great prosperity, real and speculative as well. The foundations of enormous fortunes were laid, and with great fortunes immense power was centred in individuals and corporations. The government was first appealed to for subsidies for railroads and steamship lines, and for protective tariffs by manufacturers of all kinds. The inflation, as always, was founded upon a real and very great prosperity. Every form of wealth was produced or manufactured in the country and the production was hardly then commensurate with the demand. The commerce of the United States had leaped by prodigious steps to rank among the foremost of the greatest European nations. Its ships dotted all the seas. Japan and China, chiefly through its instrumentality, were opened to the world and their vast concealed and accumulated wealth borne into the lap of the New World. The great panic of 1857 arrested for a time the country in its wild, impetuous course, and before it had fully recovered the

Civil War broke out. In many ways it was the link between the past and future. Its inevitable object, although not avowed at first, was to do away with the relic of mediævalism and barbarism,—slavery; and to the United States it was the beginning of a new era, the end of the old and the beginning of a new country. It revealed in its terrible convulsions the moral spirit and temper of the American people, calling forth their noblest as well as their worst characteristics. Patriotism, self-sacrifice, unselfishness were marked and conspicuous features in the North and South as well, and were very largely predominant, but there was a wretched, contemptible number on both sides treacherous to their country, or state, unprincipled in their course, and willing to coin money and obtain advantages at the sacrifice of the fortunes and lives of their fellow-citizens.

Throughout New England and in the Northwest, settled by the descendants of New England colonists, and in the South where the purity of the race had been

better maintained, where family traditions extended back centuries, with the noble stamp of suffering, toil, and self-abnegation, there was a burst of spontaneous patriotism, of devotion to country. It outrivalled the most heroic days of the Revolution. Fathers, sons, and husbands left their families, their firesides, abandoned their business, to confront danger, death, or, worse than death,—disability, and the consequent life of misery, humiliation, and poverty which would be entailed upon their mothers, wives, and daughters ; and offered themselves a willing sacrifice to their country. There was no thought of material interest, no hope of gain ; but inspired by the purest flame of patriotism, the loftiest conscientiousness, the heroic love of country, they gave up their all in her defence. There were heroes among the men greater than those of legend or history. There were heroines among the women greater than the heroes among the men. The widow depending for a scant subsistence on a farm amid the rugged hills of New England sent her

only son and support to fight for the country, bidding a long, perhaps eternal, farewell, with no thought save of duty, no word save that of country. And no less in the South did the owner of hundreds of slaves and thousands of acres; the mother bid adieu to a delicately nurtured son and send him forth to battle for the loved and happy South. And they went from the rugged hills of New England, from the savannahs of the South, inspired equally by the love of what each deemed his country and thought his duty, with equal heroism; and the end was the happy return home of the Northern conqueror, or the Southern hero borne back on his shield, and often a lonely grave side by side beneath the pines of Virginia—a willing sacrifice on the altar of their country. Great and noble descendants they were of the noble early colonists, and they carried out their principles in such a way that it would have brought lasting immortality to their country were it then swallowed up in oblivion.

It was natural that during the war a

reckless spirit should pervade the nation. A large portion of the able-bodied men of the North were suffering, fighting, and dying for their country, and on the side of the enemy practically all were enlisted in the cause of the Confederacy. All the production and wealth of the country went for the support and maintenance of the armies. The Titan struggle absorbed the entire forces of the nation. The period was one of strain as well as strife, and of recklessness in civil as well as in military life. Speculation was rampant and pervaded even the government. Men of high position did not hesitate to coin money out of the suffering and needs of the nation and, most monstrous of all crimes, to jeopardize the lives of the soldiers for an additional margin of profit. Contractors of all kinds, with the connivance or assistance of members of Congress or government officers (who unblushingly shared the profits), amassed large fortunes, piling up thousands and millions of dollars over the dead bodies of their victims lying stark and unburied on the

wastes of the Southern battlefields. The moral sense of the people necessarily became lowered and blunted. Rules and principles which had guided them hitherto were regarded as Puritanical and were thrown aside. It was a period of *après moi le déluge*, a frantic struggle for pleasure and excitement while the nation lost and the individual survived. But at last it was over and peace was restored to the country ; and while the evils which existed during the war could not at once be conjured away, they were gradually mitigated and order and reserve prevailed again. The Nation grew in greatness and prosperity to an extent hitherto undreamed of. Immigration poured in through all the ports into the land, fructifying the soil, opening up the country, and developing its resources. Railroads were multiplied and the markets and producers brought into communication. Manufactures multiplied, thousands of looms were plying with incessant thrift, while commerce, bearing in her train comfort, enlightenment, and progress, extended

throughout the country. What had been wastes were teeming farms, what had been woodlands were lawns, what had before been regarded as luxuries were now considered as necessities. It was an era of almost universal comfort and wealth—but it was also an era when the old guiding stars of their ancestors, independence and integrity, were being dimmed by the great orb of Mammon. All danger seemed averted; in every struggle the people had been victorious and they thought themselves justified in relaxing all efforts, in losing sight of the principles of liberty and good government, and in devoting themselves wholly to the pursuit of money. The patriotism which had been aroused in these principles when any great danger had come to the country was now dormant; and yet it was no less needed in the long years of peace and specious prosperity which followed—years which ushered in a thousand forms of corruption. But it is infinitely more difficult to maintain a steady and watchful patriotism that strives and toils and sacrifices time and wealth

for the maintenance and preservation of liberty and good government than to have it stirred by the poetry of war, the heroism of battle, appealing to the romance of the heart and the imagination.

From the close of the Rebellion until the end of the century the key-note of the life of the nation was in two words—money and concentration. Money was the god of the people as never before and consolidation and concentration prevailed in politics and in economic and social life until the strong individualism which had helped to found the country, and which later could save it, was swallowed up and lost.

During this time statesmanship had declined and politics in their modern sense permeated everything and prevailed everywhere. The best intellect and the best character of the country found other fields more congenial and attractive than the service of the government and in the mad pursuit of wealth each man was apt to neglect his duty to the state. The consequence was that the least desirable

elements succeeded in obtaining power, not so much in the national as in the state and municipal governments. Having once obtained power, even while using and abusing it, they perfected organizations by which they were enabled to fasten their government upon the people for many years to come. These machines, or rings, as they were called, became very powerful, chiefly in the more populated states and cities. They maintained themselves by the plunder of the people and supported from the spoils a number of followers infinitely more numerous, but quite as subservient, as the retainers of the feudal barons of the Middle Ages. By their numbers, by the manipulation of votes, they succeeded in maintaining their chiefs in power, while in return the chiefs through every form of extortion and blackmail, not only upon great corporations and moneyed institutions, but upon the criminal or semi-criminal classes, levied so large a tribute that their followers were well provided for and maintained in comfort and idleness at the expense of the

people at large. While this was more prevalent in state and city governments, these rings and machines were enabled to send representatives and senators to the national government, and these, totally without any qualifications whatever, perverted the great trusts reposed in them to the advantage or benefit of such of their constituents as had aided them with money for the control of votes.

The country was divided into two great parties,—the Republican and the Democratic. The former, which had come into power with the opening of the Rebellion, achieved enduring triumph and earned the gratitude of the people by the successful conduct of the gigantic struggle and by its glorious and successful termination. It had saved the nation and freed from bondage 5,000,000 of slaves. Its head, President Lincoln, was one of the heroic figures in history, who truly gave his life for the country ; and, his great work done, fell beneath the hand of an assassin. This party was retained in power by a grateful people for nearly a

quarter of a century, and rendered the nation as a whole immense service ; but it was naturally centralizing in tendency, and committed to a policy essentially necessary during the war and perhaps for some time afterwards, but which, carried to an extreme, became eventually very detrimental to the prosperity of the country. This was the cherished doctrine of protection.

The old theory of political economy, that luxuries should be taxed and the necessities of life admitted free was modified and changed to a process of taxing to a greater and greater extent the importation of any product which might or could by any possibility compete with any the United States then raised or manufactured or might possibly manufacture or raise in the future. As a war measure this was perhaps the simplest way of raising money, and the theory advanced, that as the wages of laborers were higher in the United States than in other countries, so duties should be levied on imports equivalent to the difference in value of

such wages, was a plausible one, and if the protection theory had been carried no further would have aroused no opposition. This, however, came to be little more than an excuse. Duties of eighty per cent. were imposed on many articles in common use, such as woollen goods, while on others they ran as high as two hundred to three hundred per cent. Vast subsidies were granted to corporations for building railroads. Enormous grants of land were donated and the government was being ever more and more appealed to for assistance in projects and enterprises of all kinds. From being the least governed, and in that sense the best governed, people before the war, the American people were gradually looking upon the central government at Washington as a vast storehouse from which to borrow, or take under pretence of borrowing, something which they never expected to return. The change in the country and in the pursuits of the people were not less manifest than the tendency of the government. From a great agricultural and commercial

nation, where comfort was universal and poverty was almost unknown, where excessive wealth was unheard of and general prosperity and well-being widely extended, it became a nation in which the elements were rapidly trending in two diverse directions.

CHAPTER III

THE EVILS OF PSEUDO-POLITICS

THE disasters which ensued in years of reaction from inflated and speculative prosperity led the people to look to the other great party—the Democratic—for the relief which they demanded. It came into power under a President of the highest integrity and of that common sense which is akin to genius. He foresaw the evils and dangers besetting the nation and did what lay within him to avert them, but he was almost alone of his party, and the change in government effected little for the people at large.

It necessarily disappointed the exaggerated hopes and anticipations which the people cherished of a golden era. The Democratic party suffered a defeat in the ensuing election, and the Republican party was restored to power.

Elated by this reversal of the popular judgment and in spite of the efforts of an estimable President, the leaders entered upon a course of extravagance, recklessness, and folly. The protective tariff was practically made prohibitive, while the pensions were increased in number and amount, until thirty years after the war, there were nearly one million pensioners on the rolls, and the annual budget was greater than that required to maintain the largest standing armies of Europe. Centralization became more and more the characteristic of the government, and it was looked upon as a source of power and wealth to be bullied, browbeaten, and circumvented in every way possible. Paternalism and socialism unconsciously developed and spread until they became a habit of thought. So many men were supported or assisted by the governments, federal, state, and municipal, that it seemed to those not so favored that they were undergoing an injustice—a wrong.

There were 150,000 or more federal employees; of state and municipal a

larger aggregate number. There were nearly one million pensioners. There were the great manufacturing interests with their ramifications benefited by protective tariffs, railroads with subsidies, traction lines with gratuitous franchises, and vast armies of contractors, builders, etc., aided directly by the governments.

All these interests constituted a large proportion of the people of the United States, and it was not unnatural that a leaning, a dependence, on the government should gradually usurp the old principles of independence and self-reliance and effect a change in the purpose and character of the American people.

The condition of many of the local governments at this time was deplorable. The machine candidates, borne into power on the sea of corruption, were themselves bound, on the "honor among thieves" principle, as well as the fear of rebellion and by the necessity of providing for the future, to reward their followers at the expense of the people at large. If the elective candidates were bad, the officials

nominated for the various offices were frequently worse. Education, training, merit, or integrity were almost openly sneered at. The only qualifications were subserviency to the party in power, or the doubtful services rendered to the political leader, or boss. Appointments were made in a manner that would be farcical if it were not pitiful. Where legal knowledge was required, a farmer or bankrupt merchant was sent to occupy the office; where a knowledge of commerce was necessary, an impecunious lawyer or itinerant physician was chosen. Every department in the national government, with the exception of the navy, and to some little extent of the army, was administered by men without qualifications for positions they occupied, unless by hazard or chance their deficiencies were balanced by occasional evidences of capacity and honesty. If the national government was administered in so unfortunate a manner, the state and municipal governments were infinitely worse. With them, even the homage that vice pays to

virtue was not shown. Many of the larger states, and most of the large cities, were systematically robbed, and the more wealthy they were the more flagrant and wholesale was the robbery.

It was evident that so corrupt and unusual a state of affairs should arouse opposition and dissent from the better elements of the American people, however engrossed they were in their personal pursuits or pleasures. Public opinion was aroused when the evil had become too great, or when business or pleasure had allowed a few moments' reflection. It was apparent that the electoral franchise, which should have been sacred to the welfare of the country, was notoriously violated. Such isolated and spasmodic efforts to effect needed reforms were of much temporary good, but unless sustained and maintained by an eternal watchfulness and care the old condition of affairs was sure to return. A little improvement was nevertheless made. Sometimes reform lasted for a few years, and even when the mercenary and unprincipled

elements returned to power, it left some residuum of good, and was an object-lesson, however small, of what might be accomplished by persistent and conscientious efforts in the same direction.

Private occupations and business anxiety engrossed almost the entire attention and energies of the people. The struggle for existence was becoming more fierce, competition more keen, and the object and end of life, happiness and prosperity, more and more difficult to obtain. It was not easy to fight against the professional politicians, who depended for their daily bread on the use they made of the electoral franchise, to the perversion of which they devoted their entire life, while those engrossed in honest labor could spare at the best but a few hours of their time to the study and solution of the problems of municipal, state, and federal government. Aside from the difficulties involved, the noisome moral atmosphere and unattractive surroundings of political life debarred the more sensitive natures from entering into it.

The laudable ambition of serving one's country, together with its glorious past history, loved and enhanced in retrospect, still attracted men of excellent reputation and superior intelligence. Honored and esteemed in their private life, in their business callings, with a purely theoretical idea of the administration of government, they were impelled by the highest of motives to offer themselves as candidates for its service. The ordeal they were obliged to pass through appalled many at the threshold of their career. If poor in pocket, they found how almost hopeless it was to achieve any position of authority, usefulness, and independence. If possessed of ample means they were disgusted that these should be considered an essential factor for advancement in political life. If, perhaps callous by nature, or thinking that good might result from evil and that the end justified the means, they persisted, their moral sense, their conception of government, received shocks from which it was difficult to recover.

The lack of integrity, the disregard of

every obligation, the hideous mesh of trickery and deceit which formed the essential features of the earlier stages at least, were so totally at variance with their previous experience in business that they were either disheartened and retired from the struggle, or persisted, realizing what little good any individual or even a small collection of individuals could accomplish. Politics were something apart, radically different from anything else, governed by other rules and with a code of morality of appalling laxity. It thus came to pass that fewer and fewer of the better class of men at this time entered the public service, more especially in the large centres of population where political corruption flourished in its greatest luxuriance.

Nevertheless the small leaven throughout the country did accomplish something. Such reforms as civil service, the purification of the ballot, more equal taxation, and many lesser but not less beneficial measures were due to their example and persistent influence.

They were however regarded as ama-

teurs, caressed because of their money or feared for their intelligence, but in the main powerless as against the majority of the professional politicians, whose present, past, and future were bound up in their trade, who had no principles to sacrifice, no interest to lose, and no conscience to reproach them. The existence, the fortune, the lives of these men were entirely dependent on the positions they could secure or the money they could obtain legitimately or illegitimately from politics. They joined one of the two great parties, knowing nothing of the principles involved and caring less, but ticketing themselves with the word "Republican" or "Democrat," whichever seemed to favor the greatest chance of preferment and pecuniary gain. They frequently changed the ticket as occasion suggested it, or betrayed their own party from within, dickering and dealing with their nominal adversaries, who were in reality their friends and men operating in the same way and for the same object. Each party was divided up into various machines and organizations in

the different states and the cities, and the only bounds to their arrogance and power was the occasional revolt of the people, who had grown tired of being bought and sold by a class of men whom they would have disdained to engage as office boys in their business. This condition of affairs, while general throughout the country, existed in its most aggravated form in the larger cities, where the spoils of office and money interests were greater and more numerous, while the less thickly settled states were relatively exempt. They on the other hand were more apt to choose men of no knowledge of the world, with little education and experience, and with narrow views, however honest they might be. While this did no particular harm in their state legislatures, the senators and representatives sent to Washington formed the continual menace to the business interests and prosperity of the country. But the extremes of vicious and unprincipled politics were naturally in the large cities. Here was the centre of the most concrete forms of wealth, where resorted the dangerous

class of foreign extraction and the home product as well. To these the electoral franchise meant nothing more than a more or less valuable asset, to be realized upon by either of the parties, whichever should place the highest value upon it. They enrolled in one of the organizations, nominally Democratic in New York, Republican in Philadelphia, and alternately one or the other in Chicago, under a boss or leader who led them to a wholesale robbery of the inhabitants far more lucrative than all the pillage of the Middle Ages, and to which end every form of trickery was used.

Franchises were given away or refused, corporations and institutions were attacked or favored, land was condemned, rendered valuable or useless, by instituting or refusing improvements, all according as money was paid or withheld, while the real-estate exchanges and the stock markets formed fruitful fields from which the more prosperous leaders garnered their continuous harvests. The lower classes and their followers had a license to

blackmail or extort tribute from every form of poverty, vice, and crime within the limits of the city. Laws were made and repealed as suited their convenience, taxation as their necessities demanded, and the only limit to the wholesale tyranny and exaction was the means and ability of the citizens to pay. Now and then a revolt would occur, the wretched gangs of plunderers would be turned adrift, and the cities would be honestly administered for a short period. Again they would come back, and if at first their course was more subtle and cautious, shame was soon thrown aside and the old methods, with some refinements and modifications perhaps, were resumed. Conscious of their limitations these organizations rarely furnished leaders to the federal government, although frequently members, for they realized that the country at large would never submit, however easy-going and indifferent it might be, to the wholesale extortion and corruption prevalent in the great and busy municipalities.

CHAPTER IV

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ASCENDENCY

THE commercial and industrial life of the people, while suffering from the same tendencies as the political life, was on a very much higher plane. Next to the learned professions the best talent and the highest integrity were devoted to these two pursuits, which made vast strides during this period. Inventions were multiplied, improvements on those already made almost recreated them. Everything was amplified, harmonized, and simplified. Production of all kinds had become a science. Where isolated farms had heretofore existed in very great numbers, supplying the wants of their owners, with a surplus to carry to the market, now great areas came under one management. Human labor was in great part superseded by machinery.

Fertilization was carried on with the aid of chemistry and the yield of agriculture doubled and quadrupled. Not only was the growth of national products increased a thousand-fold, but new methods for their conservation and preservation were invented, while the rapid development of the means of transportation rendered them accessible to the markets of the world. The mining industry was in no way behind farming. Electricity became an important factor in disintegrating the ore from the dross, and the production not only of gold and silver, but of the more useful metals and minerals, as coal, iron, etc., was very greatly simplified and enormously increased. Manufactories of all kinds had multiplied in an equal or greater proportion and the power used in working them was *simplified* and *increased*. They took the raw products of the soil and transformed them into finished material. All this was done in less time and with less labor and in greater quantity than ever before. Perhaps most marked of all was the development

in the method of transportation. Railroads had been built so that every section of the vast territory of the United States was within a few miles of the interminable lines of steel, while the cities and towns were traversed in every direction by traction lines. The whole nation was a vast hive of industry and the creation of wealth was greater than that of any other contemporaneous people.

Concentration and consolidation existing as they did in political, social, and economic life, gave a centripetal tendency to all phases of life. The rich became richer and the poor poorer. The great middle class which hitherto had formed the bulwark and the strength of the nation, was rapidly tending towards one or the other extreme. It had during all these years, by its moral force, superior education, integrity, and industry, raised the country to the pinnacle of prosperity at which it now stood. But with the new tendencies, the inbred and inherited virtues of its members prevented them from the acquisition of wealth by the dubious

means now so generally employed, and the increased cost of living and raising of the scale of comfort rapidly reduced them to the condition hardest of all to bear,—that of genteel poverty. They fought and struggled along against the social and economic tyranny surrounding them, but, actuated as they were by more rigid principles, they were inevitably destined to succumb. Independence in politics had become impossible and in the economic life little less so.

Unfortunate it was that the distribution of wealth was not in even channels. Numerous and great inventions had replaced human labor of all kinds with machinery, so that the manual features of life became fewer and fewer, while the place of machinery in modern existence became all pervading. It was to a certain extent an era of brain power, not essentially in its highest abstract form, but in its various adaptations to human wants and desires. At first this life was in a measure open to all, but the *first* fortunate ones kept the power and wealth to themselves; only allowing

their personal favorites and adherents to succeed them in the work. It was thus that every concrete result of industry and enterprise became centred in the hands of its founder and creator and those whom he was willing to associate with him. New blood, new enterprise, and new energy were undoubtedly necessary but the circles thus formed were small and restricted in comparison to the people at large. The ones outside the pale found it more and more difficult to obtain access to the inner circles where the power and wealth was centred and from whence it flowed.

The social life of the people during this period was neither as vicious as the political life nor as brilliant and prosperous as the economic condition, but followed, in a vague and uncertain way, the general tendency of the times towards extreme wealth and so-called exclusiveness, and poverty, relative or absolute, and consequent isolation. There was little individuality or character to society, as there came to be no higher standard than that of wealth.

Looking back to the earlier period when the people at large held higher aims and aspirations, when their lives were more simply ordered and their purposes more definite, social life, while extremely simple, possessed a certain dignity and refinement which was subsequently lost. The colonists brought over with them some of the traditions of their home life, and much that was best in English, French, and Dutch society was retained. There was a respect for birth and attainments, and courtesy was regarded as a prerequisite to good breeding. The absence of wealth and the general prevalence of well-being and comfort placed the people so far upon a footing of equality, leaving for the only distinction those real virtues of social intercourse, — training, birth, and education. Many of the more burdensome and restrictive formalities of the European life had been abandoned. Intercourse between the sexes was free and unrestrained. Men respected women because they exacted respect, and women trusted men, who, proud of the trust,

rarely abused it. Early marriages were the rule and families were numerous. In thinly settled communities more intimate relations between neighbors naturally prevailed. Independence and self-reliance were characteristic not only of the men but of the women. The absence of accumulated wealth rendered it necessary for the sons to start and provide for themselves and for the daughters to marry early and become true helpmates of their husbands. The vast areas offered an illimitable field for their enterprise, and when the East was well settled the young men emigrated to the great prairies where fertile lands were at the disposal of any settler who would reclaim them. They began life anew, carrying their family traditions and customs to their Western homes. Full of courage and self-reliance, if narrow and prejudiced, they had an honest and exaggerated pride in their achievements, and nourished the belief that the children should display the same qualities. The strong element of religion which so pervaded the lives of the

early colonists and lent to them so gloomy and sombre a tint, was gradually becoming softened and chastened by new surroundings, new intercourse and associations. The mild and gentle religion of love, charity, and benevolence superseded the harsh doctrines and merciless severity drawn from the Old Testament which formed the tenets of the belief of the early colonists. If life was less austere and devout it was pervaded by more kindness and charity and very much less hypocrisy, the worst and most marked Anglo-Saxon vice. This early colonial society was little changed during the first period in the nation's history, indeed not until the great convulsion caused by the Rebellion did it assume the heartless, flip-pant, and vulgar tone which prevailed for so long thereafter, and which seemed to eliminate the more graceful, refined, and intelligent elements of life, and devote itself to the mad pursuit of ostentation and wealth.

There was evolving, in a blind and tentative way, much that was good during

this period to supplement the defects in the political and social organizations. In politics the reform clubs and organizations always accomplished good, even when they failed of any particular purpose. The idea of honest government was extended and was impressed upon an ever-increasing number of people. Every little good accomplished left suggestions of greater good to follow, and in the spasmodic revolutions which took place, some were successful—as on one or two occasions when the corrupt governments of New York and Philadelphia were overthrown. Even though this was but temporary and the evil forces returned to power, nevertheless there had been during a greater or shorter period a beneficent example of good and honest administration of government and the succeeding revolution was thus rendered the more easy. So in the social life of the people a rational union was attempted in various forms to take the place of government inefficiency and to counteract the effects of indiscriminate and pauperizing charities. These were

people's clubs, semi-social organizations, temperance taverns, coffee houses, co-operative farms, and other similar enterprises, which were gradually teaching people that self-reliance and cohesion could even then accomplish much, and under a more scientific arrangement would be capable of ameliorating the human race as far as its imperfections would allow.

CHAPTER V

INDUSTRIAL DANGERS

THE decade preceding the Spanish and American War was one of general discontent and unrest, the consequence of commercial, financial, and industrial depression. Years of prosperity, overproduction, and inflation culminated in 1890 by the gigantic failure of one of the largest international banking houses in the world. The immediate result of this was the calling in of vast loans in the United States and in several of the South American countries. The latter, unable to meet these demands, practically collapsed and sunk into not only financial and commercial stagnation, but political as well. They became practically bankrupt from every point of view. The United States, immensely wealthy even at that time, not only in the potential resources, but in a vast amount of

accumulated capital, was better able to meet the demand suddenly made upon it and emerged from the crisis with its integrity as a nation and a people unimpaired. So great a drain, however, upon its resources and the withdrawal of so much needed capital could not fail to affect adversely the prosperity of the country. It was thrown back some years and a curtailment of employment necessarily followed. Economy was forced upon the people, a good and wholesome lesson to those to whom it could properly apply, but to those who had been able to barely earn a mere subsistence for themselves and their families economy became suffering and misery. This was universal throughout the country, and in 1893 another great financial upheaval prostrated anew the energies and drew still further upon the exhausted resources of the people.

It must be understood that these financial crises were not alone the cause of the distress and prostration of industries, but were merely symptomatic of the general

economic condition of the country. Entirely misunderstood at that time, as they had been previously, financial operations were supposed to be as independent a branch of industry and trade as farming or manufacturing and, if the prosperity of the country never was credited to the financial power, the evils always were ascribed to its malign potency. It was not understood then nor had it become so until within very recent years that financial transactions depended absolutely on the general condition of the country. On its prosperity the great masters of finance, controllers of capital in its most liquid and available form, depended. Failing this, money could not only be unproductive and idle but even disastrous in their hands unless there was a demand for its use from the real producers of wealth, the tillers of the soil, the miners and manufacturers, and the transportation agencies. All this was so little understood that the discontent and distress which spread and became so general during these and the ensuing years, and which were owing to

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overproduction and the unequilibrium of the law of supply and demand, were ascribed to the evil potency of what was called the money power, whereas the bankers and capitalists representing this were equal sufferers with the farmers, miners, and manufacturers. The long years of prosperity had overdeveloped the country. The production exceeded any demand, and when in this period of crises retrenchment and economy became general throughout the world the farmers first found that they had raised a much larger quantity of food products than would be consumed at home or than could be profitably sold abroad, owing to the absurd mediæval tariff laws which had so hampered international trade and fostered indirectly the growth of wheat, corn, cotton, the raising of beef, swine, tobacco, and all the necessities of life, abroad. If foreign countries could not exchange their manufactured products for our agricultural wealth without the additional exorbitant duties, thus enhancing the cost to the consumers as the cost was enhanced

to the people of the United States, so a premium was practically put upon the production by them of all that they needed. Thus the great wheat fields of Russia and Hungary and the Danubian Provinces were vastly extended, and owing to the more liberal tariffs, found a ready market in France, Germany, and England, while the growth of cotton in India, Egypt, and other countries expanded in equal proportions. As the farmers suffered from an inability to dispose of their surplus products, and as the mortgages on their farms were foreclosed, so they were unable to purchase for themselves any more of the manufactured products than the strictest necessity demanded. The manufacturing concerns consequently stagnated and failed, while the railroads drifted one after another into bankruptcy. The entire country was sinking into a state of privation and distress which it had not known for a generation or more. Almost universal discontent was expressed in various forms, but being of the Anglo-Saxon or Teutonic races, there was

comparatively little violence in the main, although strikes were very frequent and some not entirely bloodless. But populism and socialism grew rampant. The boasted general education of the country was not proving of any value in solving the great economic problems presented, but being that modicum of knowledge which is dangerous, merely stirred up the people to seek remedies in all sorts of visionary schemes. Anarchists existed, but they were of foreign birth and found no considerable following in the country. Utterly misunderstanding what money was or its use, the great masses, chiefly of the farming community, were seized with a wild and fanatic hatred of money and the money power. Reckless demagogues inflamed their minds and led them on for purposes of their own to advocate schemes of more or less wildness and absurdity. A considerable number insisted that the government should issue as much paper money as might be required to satisfy every citizen. They had forgotten the lessons of the Civil War and of the

Revolution, when a regular amount had been created in times of national crisis and which, even though limited in circulation, and although the patriotism of the people was appealed to to sustain the credit of the government, could not help depreciating to a frightful extent. In spite of these lessons they advocated in time of peace, not a restricted issue of government notes to carry the nation over a crisis, but an absolutely unlimited amount to be extended indefinitely. The great majority of the people naturally could not favor anything so childishly absurd on its face, but a large number, almost one half of the voting people, did favor an unlimited issue of silver money with the face value of gold stamped upon it. As silver at this time had fallen more than 100% in intrinsic or market value and as it was perfectly well known that its supply was almost inexhaustible, while the methods of its production were greatly cheapened, this was only less absurd than the unlimited issue of paper money. Silver having been discarded by practically

all the nations of the world as the monetary standard its intrinsic value would fall in proportion as it became more plentiful and its use more restricted.

CHAPTER VI

SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

IN the ensuing elections the Republican candidate stood not for the narrow and vague principles of the party, but in reality for all that was conservative in politics and economic life. He was the representative of law and order as opposed to a demagogue who favored modification if not abrogation of the sacred rights guaranteed by the Constitution and advocated ideas which would have precipitated a social revolution.

Although a demagogue, this man, personally honest, was superficially brilliant, but imperfectly educated, with a narrow mind and defective judgment. The general suffering and discontent among the farmers and working-men sought an exponent; and he by a dazzling effort of oratory became the idol of the masses

and was triumphantly chosen candidate of the Democratic party. The declaration of principles was more than radical, it was revolutionary.

The whole system of the government was attacked in the Constitution and the Supreme Court, the two sacred bulwarks of the nation, the ægis of its liberties. But, even more pernicious than this in the eyes of the world, it advocated a silver basis, the repudiation of half the debts of the people, a reign of dishonor and chaos which would have immediately wrecked the country. One of the two great parties of the nation was thus openly committed to the destruction of liberty, the violation of contracts, and a vague and dangerous socialistic experiment. And wonderful as it now seems these principles nearly triumphed. The incredible number of six million voters, representing thirty millions or more of the people, were so wearied with the supposed injustice of the social and economic conditions, so indignant at the unequal distribution of power and wealth, that they blindly welcomed the

socialistic heresies and monstrous doctrines embodied in the so-called Democratic platform. These masses were for the most part honest, hard-working people, with little or no mixture of the vicious or criminal element, but they were woefully ignorant, and deluded by specious promises and glittering fallacies. Their condition seemed to them such that any change must be for the better.

Fortunately the conservative element triumphed in the ensuing elections and the country was saved. But the danger had been great and recovery was necessarily slow. That unrest and discontent should prevade so large a portion of the population was an ominous sign and was destined to find some expression unless conditions radically improved. But the course of destiny was evolving a new outlet for the restless discontent of the masses and an era of mental and physical expansion was about to be ushered in, broadening the minds of the people, enlarging their horizon, and providing new

undeveloped fields for their restless activity and energy.

The wretched mismanagement of the Spanish colonies and more particularly of Cuba, the richest and most valued of them all, had led to repeated risings and revolts, which had hitherto proved abortive and which had been suppressed with a most brutal cruelty.

At this time the revolt in Cuba had existed for two or three years, and by the bitterness of the feeling engendered and the ruthless character of the strife, the fair island had been devastated and the people slaughtered or starved. Even then the United States had hesitated to intervene, had only remonstrated against the crying shame at her very doors, until one of her war ships visiting in Havana harbor was blown up and the greater part of her complement of men and officers killed. Although no blame was imputed to the Spanish government, the conviction existed in the United States that the diabolical plot was conceived and executed by subordinate Spanish officials, and the

resentment and indignation became so strong that war was inevitable. Within two months it was declared, and the call of the President for volunteers was responded to with enthusiasm. For every soldier desired five offered themselves. And these were not the idle, unemployed, and vicious classes, but for the most part the flower of the nation, imbued with an intense love of country, a desire to work for her, fight for her, die for her. Personal interests, private fortunes, family ties were all sacrificed for the beloved country, and, filled with enthusiasm, two hundred thousand men, for the most part intelligent and educated and physically superior, marched at the behest of their country, only anxious to give their all to her.

Scattered in the camps throughout the South they waited patiently for food, equipment, and shelter, and longed for the time when they should be led to battle. The nation was unprepared for war, it is true, but all the requisites were there—herds of cattle, granaries of wheat, and cotton in quantity, wool, etc., as well as

vast government establishments, great manufacturing concerns for cotton, wool, leather, etc., large factories for arms and munitions of war. And the soldiers, as weeks passed by, came to the reluctant conclusion that incompetence or worse prevailed at Washington.

They were anxious to fight for their country, to suffer if necessary, and they shrank from no hardships incident to warfare ; but their patience was exhausted and their indignation aroused to the highest pitch when privation, suffering, sickness, and death prevailed in the home camps—in the richest country in the world and in the midst of their friends, who were prevented from coming to their assistance. The greatest business nation of the world was managing the business part of the war like a child. The long waiting, the unnecessary suffering, the sickness and death continued for the majority throughout the summer, until in the autumn peace was declared and the regiments were gradually disbanded. A small and fortunate number went to Cuba, Porto Rico, and

the Philippines and covered themselves with glôry. The war was won by the soldiers with a few very competent officers to lead, and in spite of every hindrance and drawback incident to perverted politics.

The campaigns of the army before Santiago and at Manila were brilliant exhibitions of the courage and dash of our soldiers. In the former they were practically without leadership. They stormed entrenchments with a dauntless heroism which convinced the Spaniards that resistance would be futile, and the city of Santiago was won and the campaign ended by the individual heroism of the men. They showed the same qualities, the same capacity, in Manila, though the army played an entirely subordinate part there. Indeed the war was substantially a naval one—its shortness, its brilliancy, the scientific precision with which it was carried on, were entirely due to the efficiency of the navy.

This was the one department of the government removed from politics, and

was also a brilliant example of the perfection to which one department could attain if administered with a single eye to the public good. Examples of efficient management abounded in the daily life of the people in every enterprise and industry, but, with the exception of the navy, were conspicuously absent in public life. The splendid qualities of the American people which raised them to such a proud pre-eminence in every sphere of life, and which collectively had built up in two centuries the greatest nation the world has seen, shown everywhere except in politics. These had become so perverted from their lofty ideals, so degraded and debased, that the men who should, by their very character and attainments, have been elected for government positions were debarred, and carried their abilities into other fields.

The work of the navy in this war was of unbroken success, clear cut, scientific, and complete—a revelation to foreigners and to many of the people of the United States. It was a triumphant continuation

of the brilliant annals of the navy, which from its inception, during the Revolutionary War, sprang to prominence, insignificant though it was; during the War of 1812 defeated the English navy wherever the odds were not too great; and during the Rebellion became the most efficient, and powerful in the world.

Neglected and regarded with jealousy by Congress, it was suffered to decline for twenty years, when a fortunate realizing sense of the vulnerability and helplessness of the nation without an efficient navy led to its slow upbuilding. The training and personnel had fortunately maintained a high standard, so that there only remained the construction of modern high-class ships to restore it to its former prestige. At the outbreak of the war, if the ships were few in number they were admirable in construction, armament, and equipment; and commanded and manned, as they were, by highly trained, efficient, and picked men, secure from the blight of politics, the brilliant career of the navy was the

natural outcome of training and the traditions of a century of triumphs.

The war closed with a general admiration and love for the navy diffused throughout the country, greater than had heretofore existed, and Congress, obeying the evident will of the people, authorized increases commensurate with the growth and development of the country.

In contrast with the mismanagement by the administration of the war and of all concerns where politics were supreme, certain private enterprises stood pre-eminent. Among these was the Young Men's Christian Association. When confusion and disorder prevailed in every army encampment, when the soldiers arrived and the provisions, and tents, and equipment did not, when all sorts of makeshifts to obtain sufficient food or clothing were used, this association established its various branches with a simplicity, ease, and precision in most marked contrast with the inefficiency of the government. Their tents were among the first erected, were the largest, the driest, and most

commodious. They were boarded when the officers' tents were pitched on the wet and sun-dried ground. They had camp chairs, settees, and cots when the army did not, and they provided for the suffering soldiers every material comfort practicable, together with a rational spiritual consolation. They supplied a dry shelter, ice, letter paper, stamps, books, stationery, games, and every little comfort or necessity unobtainable elsewhere. They did an infinite amount of good, and they were a constant object-lesson as to what a simple, honest management could accomplish, when the administration was floundering in a mesh of incompetence.

Another private or semi-private institution, the famous Red Cross Society, in another sphere, did an equal amount of good, and was simply and efficiently managed as were most private enterprises undertaken by the people of the United States. It supplemented the woefully incompetent medical department of the army and saved the health and lives of many thousands of soldiers.

The Red Cross was supported with a zeal, enthusiasm, and a lavish generosity which was adequate for a very great, instead of a small, war. It was more peculiarly women's province, and they offered not only their money and time but their services, from the most fashionable ladies in the land to the humblest shop-girl.

But the Red Cross and the Young Men's Christian Association were only symptomatic of the earnest and generous desire of the people in every section of the country, and in every class of society, to render assistance to the government and to supplement the deficiencies of the administration.

It was a magnificent burst of patriotism extending from Maine to Florida and Massachusetts to California. The men were anxious to fight for the country, the women to work for it, and both to give for it freely of their substance and of their lives.

These, among other object-lessons, were teaching the people to reflect, and inculcating by iteration that what private

initiative could do was equally in the power of the government, provided the offices were filled with ordinarily competent and honest men. Such lessons were to bear fruit later and gradually became productive of very great good.

CHAPTER VII

AWAKENING OF THE PEOPLE TO THE EVILS OF POLITICS

THE immediate consequences of the war, brilliant though it was, were prolific of discontent, scandals, and consequent investigations. These as usual revealed little that was specific, but suggested much, and public opinion rapidly formed into conclusions, which, if vague, were none the less deep rooted, that the government was permeated with politics and that congressmen more often had personal interests to serve than an honest desire to further the efficiency of the military service.

If in the gigantic contracts of the war, money did not flow directly or indirectly into the pockets of these rulers of the nation, certainly the results were unduly favorable to the great firms dealing in

food supplies, munitions of war, clothing, and other equipment, too often of inferior quality. In the all-important matter of appointments in the army, the vicious political system forced the hand of the executive. These were demanded as of right by the senators, congressmen, and influential men in various sections of the country and under threat of hampering or embarrassing the administration if refused. While some little regard was had to capacity in these positions, yet the inexperience of these appointees was almost universal and their natural abilities, unfortunately, not always sufficient to enable them to learn the complicated duties of their new profession. The consequence was, that the camp sites selected were injudicious from every point of view and in many cases utterly indefensible on either sanitary grounds or nearness to the seaboard or for any other reason whatsoever. The clothing and equipping of the men was slowly organized, inadequately performed, and unsatisfactory. The food was not always what it should have been,

its preparation was not understood, excesses were allowed, license was too general; with the inevitable consequence that sickness and death spread throughout the various sections of the army, aided as it was by the inexperience and carelessness of the officers and the utter ignorance of the men taken from every walk of life. If the soldiers were patriotic and animated in many instances by the highest motives, in others by the youthful love of adventure, and almost universally by the abstract devotion to country,—nowhere more strongly developed than in the United States,—the officers were often lacking in education, attainments, motives, and capacity. The more the latter were known, the more they were disliked or distrusted, while the regular army officers, graduated from West Point, scattered here and there in positions of command in the volunteer army were the more esteemed. At first the exaggerated ideas of their severity and rigorous discipline frightened the men, but afterwards they saw that this

was merely the discipline necessary to any army, that their knowledge conduced to the comfort and well-being of the soldiers, and that the profession which they loved made them desirous of creating as effective a machine as human nature is capable of, and as the reports of the victories came in, the knowledge that they were due to the training and efficiency of the regular army immensely augmented the respect beginning to be felt for it and awoke a pride in the volunteers to emulate them.

The invariable, scientific, and equal success of the navy, imparted to the country at large a knowledge that training and discipline are as necessary in war as in any other profession or business, and that, given the American characteristics of intelligence and courage as a foundation, any body so organized would be practically invincible.

Upon deeper reflection and as time elapsed the people at large realized that the root of the evil lay beyond the officials who were primarily responsible.

They instinctively felt that others might have been equally inefficient and even worse and they came to the conclusion that the whole system was radically wrong and that any change or improvement, difficult and slow as it was, lay in their hands, but could only be effected by constant watchfulness and devotion of time and thought to the public interests. The crisis had been sufficiently acute to impress the lesson deeply upon the people and in the next elections the average of men chosen to represent the country was far higher than had hitherto been the case. Measures were passed for the increase and improvement of the army, as also the navy, and the administrative branch of the former in particular was reorganized so that it should contain, if not all, at least a large number of capable and experienced men of business, even more than military, capacity. Further than this, and equally important, the diplomatic and consular service was entirely reorganized and the tenure of office taken out of political vicissitudes and made permanent.

Instead of being the spoils of office given to conscienceless politicians, and in many cases to those whose records were too questionable to entitle them to any reward in their own country, these most important positions were bestowed upon men who were obliged to pass examinations in diplomacy, law, a knowledge of the language of the country to which they were accredited, and the fundamental requirements of the career. Had this been done before and had the State Department been as efficient as it subsequently became, the unfortunate Spanish War might have been avoided. The natural result of this change was long years of peace, commercial extension, and general prosperity, which the country thereafter enjoyed, although with its outlying possessions, and its more aggressive, world-wide spirit, the danger of becoming embroiled with other powers was greater than ever before.

CHAPTER VIII

THE UNITED STATES THE FOREMOST OF NATIONS

FROM a comparatively isolated nation, with a compact territory, invulnerable to attack, knowing little of exterior politics and taking less interest in them, the United States had become a very great factor in the world.

Entering upon the arena as a new-comer, it became the cynosure of all eyes, and, proudly conscious of its new position, desired to exhibit to the whole world its capacity for governing humanely and well the great colonial possessions which the fortunes of war had bestowed upon it. Necessarily at first in the hands of the naval and military authorities, these possessions were well governed by the only trained body of men in the country, and the contrast between the administration

of these provinces and the home governments, national, state, and municipal, was so great that public opinion at large favored the continuance in the same hands. Military government, however, could not continue indefinitely; but the general efficiency was maintained by placing in office resigned or retired, and selected, military or naval officers, who kept up the traditions of their class and maintained the government of these dependencies in an admirable, efficient, and economical manner. The great object-lesson commenced out of pride for the public opinion of the world, impressed the people at home still more strongly and they reasoned that if we could govern our colonies and provinces in so cleanly, so economical and so prosperous a manner, we should *a fortiori* so govern our states and cities.

It is true that the government of the new possessions was for some time by appointment and not by election; but the governments at home contained a larger direct appointive element than was

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generally recognized, while the pure elective franchise was not in reality exercised as it had been in the earlier years of the republic. The division of the people into two great parties, the guidance and control of each resting in national, state, and county committees, the system of organization in the higher form, of rings and machines in lower order—all these practically took away from the people the purely elective system of government. They had the choice of voting for one of two candidates chosen or practically appointed by the head of the organization, who in many of the states (and these the wealthiest and most populous) was a virtual dictator. It was to these machines or to the dictators that the public demand for a higher standard in the choice of candidates was addressed, and they with their supreme skill in government usually acceded to so universal a demand.

An improvement became manifest, particularly where the evils were most marked, in the state and city governments. Machines and rings, if not obedient to the

popular demand, were for a time broken up and destroyed, and a new class of men, adapted by training and natural capacity in the management and government of large concerns, became the officials and employees of the governments.

The maintenance of this improved system was, however, infinitely difficult and could not endure without constant vigilance, constant exertion, and the sacrifice of personal and private interests for the public good. The prizes to be contended for in the colonies and provinces were not very great, and it was relatively much easier to establish and maintain good government in them than in the states and cities—particularly in those which were older and richer. The numerous element of professional politicians—using the word in its debased sense—which had obtained its living from politics, particularly in the very large cities, as New York, Chicago, Boston, and Philadelphia, with those thrown out of employment, formed a dangerous and restless mass, incapable of

honest work, without principles or scruples, constituting a numerous, hostile, and compact body which had constantly to be watched and fought. These were contending for a livelihood, their bread and butter, while the honest elements which had achieved their initial success were fighting in the main for a principle. The result inevitably was that the former gradually returned to power. Conscious, however, that the public had experienced the advantages of good government, even the worst elements voluntarily introduced some of the most-needed reforms, retaining many of the trained officials in power, so that the good first achieved, while not continued in its pristine force, left much behind. This was true to a greater or lesser extent throughout the country and the people at large began to realize what an absurd anomaly they had accepted, viz., that in a country based on free and compulsory education they had chosen their rulers for the most part without regard to this essential condition and frequently in despite of it. The western and

northwestern sections of the country were the first to appreciate and apply the old forgotten test of fitness for office, and a secure tenure when fitness and integrity were proved. Many volunteers from these sections had served in the war and had remained in the colonies for some time after its termination. With open minds and quick conception they had learned what good government meant, and on their return home forced its application. Once given consecutive and fair trials, those of the states and municipalities under the new conditions became the admiration of their neighbors, and their beneficent example gradually extended throughout the country, finally purifying the Augean stables of the great, overgrown cities.

CHAPTER IX

UNIVERSAL CONSOLIDATION—THE MULTI- PLICATION OF TRUSTS

DURING this period the commercial and industrial progress of the country had been stupendous. Prior to the war it had ranked as the second or third country in wealth, commerce, and industry, its greatest and most formidable rivals being Great Britain, Germany, and Russia; the last two it readily distanced and in the course of time it outstripped even the former, becoming the first nation in the world in all that related to material welfare and well-being.

But the great tendencies which were becoming more and more manifest were gradually approaching a culminating point. If concentration and consolidation had been very general before, they now became practically universal. Every enterprise,

every industry, was centred in the hands of a very few persons, constituting a sort of commercial and financial oligarchy, at the head of which was always one man of greater wealth, power, or ability than the others. Below these was the great mass of officers and employees. The whole tendency of the age had become absolutely mechanical, the only free arbiters of individual initiative existing among the heads of the various organizations and corporations. As the railroads had perhaps been the first, from the nature of their business, to tend to consolidation, so the farmers were the last, but eventually even they were formed into a few great trusts and corporations which controlled the products of the soil as the few consolidated railroads and steamship companies conducted the transportation, while the banks and trust companies held the financial power of the country.

These social phases had been prolific of much hardship and still greater discontent. It was a new economic condition which had to be faced and the problems arising

from it satisfactorily worked out. The great fundamental evil was of course the suppression of individualism. Without money, without influence, without power, it became more and more difficult—if not impossible—for a young man of good attainments to rise. There was nothing to do of his own initiative. As against the vast farming trust, farming on a small scale was impossible. As a small merchant he was equally helpless, with the vast stores controlling trade; and soon this was equally the case throughout the various forms of industry, trade, and commerce. The only recourse was to join in a very subordinate capacity one of the huge corporations and become a part of a great machine, where advancement was only possible if he happened to fall under the favorable notice of one of the chiefs or was connected with him in some manner. Beyond doing his duty well, there was no incentive to great exertion, his rise depending on the possible chance of getting into connection through some fortuitous circumstances with his ultimate

chief; and this when the number of employees ran into the thousands could rarely happen. As the governments of the states and cities were in the hands of machines and rings, so the commercial and industrial life of the country was in the hands of small oligarchies of men, who were succeeded by their sons or their relatives, forming a family and social nucleus in which everything centred.

To offset these evident evils there flowed unquestionable benefits. The cost of production, transportation, and interchange were greatly reduced, the necessities of life had never in the world's history been so cheap, and it required only a very small income to obtain these. Up to this point and when the times were good, when all the various industries were in active operation, there was little suffering; but beyond a simple existence it was difficult for the average man to rise, and when the times were bad the necessary discharge of various employees entailed the greatest suffering upon themselves and their families.

The strong racial characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon people—the predominance of individualism—was thus gradually being modified, but it was not eradicated, as it was inherently rooted in the race. In the professions chiefly it survived. Great law firms existed, but particular lawyers were adapted for particular business and were entrusted with special work. With medicine this was still more so, and with the press there was every opportunity for a man of ability and industry to make himself known and felt, without social or political influence. The tendency, aside from these few exceptions, had gone to the extreme limit, and it extended its ramifications everywhere during the first few decades of the twentieth century, only the almost continuous prosperity of the country preventing the spread of general discontent and revolt. These conditions were moreover mitigated by the general beneficence of the various corporations, which tended to allay any rising feelings of this character, for in the main they so conducted business as to

ameliorate the hardships and injustice inherent in a vicious system, to as great an extent as was compatible with its maintenance.

CHAPTER X

THE JUDICIARY AND THE PRESS AS RESTRAINING INFLUENCES

DURING the ensuing twenty-five years there was no radical or material change in the political and sociological condition of the country. The causes which had been operative before continued and no great change took place. On the whole there was a distinct amelioration in many elements of civic life ; greater prosperity, and a greater creation of wealth ; but as its distribution up to that time had flowed in uneven channels so it continued, with the ever-increasing tendency that the rich grew richer and the poor poorer. But as the natural resources of the country and of the new colonies were practically illimitable and were constantly opened up by new and improved processes of agriculture, manufacturing, and mining,

so the general advantages, if diverted more largely in one channel, nevertheless extended to some degree throughout all classes. It was clear that the political advent of the United States as a great world power could only prove beneficial in broadening the minds and extending the mental sphere of the people. The improvement in the government, which has been alluded to, continued in an irregular and gradual manner. There were certainly no retrograde steps.

The general centralizing tendency was more and more manifest. The political power of the nation was centred in Washington, as the political power of the states in the state capitals, but most marked of all was the enormous growth of the cities at the expense of the rural population, which made them gradually almost independent commonwealths, paying, it is true, an indirect tribute to the state at large, but by reason of the payment of that tribute practically free to conduct their own affairs. As they gradually grew independent from a political point of view,

so the centralization and consolidation of wealth increased in still greater proportions. The country became absolutely tributary to these large centres of population, where all the intelligence, ambition, and energy were centred. The colonial and foreign commerce, which grew rapidly after the Spanish-American War, owing to the natural conditions then ensuing, as well as a zealous government protection, made them absolutely the entrepôts or markets for the concentration and subsequent exchange of the domestic and foreign products, natural and manufactured. In this sense they were like Carthage before the Christian era, or Venice, Genoa, and Antwerp during the Middle Ages, with the addition that the improved means of intercommunication and facilities of transportation augmented their wealth to an extent undreamed of before. They were vast maelstroms to which all that was active and intelligent in the country was drawn, the more weak to be swallowed up in the ever-whirling gulf and the stronger to rise to the centre of the whirlpool,

triumphantly maintaining themselves until displaced by others.

It was evident that this ever-growing tendency presented new problems aside from the material ones of improving the sanitary condition and rendering these abodes of vast aggregations of people and centres of wealth habitable ; aside from the means of communication and transportation, and other practical problems too numerous to mention. There were the deeper and more profound ones of the care of the old, the sick, the indigent, and infirm. The centralizing tendency had for some time made of the various governments practically protective agencies for the benefit of the weak as well as the help of the strong, but this was found absolutely insufficient, and the more it was tried the more complicated and hopeless the problem proved. Private charity was constantly appealed to and habitually exerted in a thousand different fashions. Almost every intelligent man had some scheme for improving the condition of the poor, each more impracticable than

the other. Various movements to correct the defects of the centralizing tendency were instituted, vast charitable organizations and bureaus were maintained, and effected a great amount of good, but however advantageous these adjuncts to the sociological side of the government were, they had the obvious disadvantage that personal contact with unhappiness and misfortune were obviated. The absence of this most humanizing influence was a distinct disadvantage to the poor and helpless, and indirectly injurious to the well disposed and wealthy. Poverty relieved by a kindly word, a helping hand, is strengthened to bear its burden, and by encouragement and assistance can often rise above misfortune and attain a sustaining self-respect. As applicants for relief, however well deserving, of the body or organization without the humanizing influence of personal contact, the poor gradually came to believe that it was the duty of the state or city or organized societies to care for them, and sloth and indolence were in consequence encouraged

on the one hand, while coldness and indifference increased on the other. Assistance so rendered seemed deserving of no gratitude, and when continued was gradually regarded as a right. When refused it awakened rebellious and revolutionary feelings and drove the unfortunate into violence and crime.

As these increased, so the repressive measures to frustrate them were also increased, until, instead of the assimilation of all classes through kindness, sympathy, help from the strong to the weak, from the rich to the poor, gradually the condition resolved itself into heartless organizations for the relief of those who were persistent enough or callous enough to secure assistance, and stern repression for all others. It was the negation of human sympathy and human interest and the triumph of system and organization.

The sceptical tendency of the age, the enormous development of science, had been prejudicial to the simple faith and religion of earlier generations. The world was leaning on science and ignoring

religion. Organized systematic charity had taken the place of the kindly interest and the charity of the Scriptures. The daily life of men, while albeit worthy and essentially industrious, was more guided by the provisions of the penal code than by the lessons of Christianity. Preachers there were, and churches, for the old spirit had not entirely died out, and as a salve to conscience money was given in large sums to religion, or in the name of religion. But with this salve to conscience the people in the main were satisfied. The infinite faith, the whole-souled belief, the pious reliance on God and His interpreters, were passing away, growing fainter and fainter, and with them all the appeals to the heart which, if in the past have wrought so much of harm, have done immeasurably more of good. The world of science could, and did, exist and prosper from every point of view, but a nation could never become really great with a constant negation of the heart and the impulses that spring from the heart. The simple faith in Christ that existed during



the Middle Ages and led men to sacrifice their lives and property for a vain ideal, for the rescue of His Holy Sepulchre from the infidels, and which also led to the extermination of those who differed from the faith, had given place to an absolutely cynical indifference, to a practical estimate of life according to the benefits that it would bring in the present. New and various forms and types of religion, or substitutes for religion, constantly arose. Christian Science and Mental Science grew and developed, and gave place to other forms of agnosticism and self-sufficient seeking for truths never revealed and never meant to be revealed. The discovery and utilization of all the forces of nature had blinded men to the fact that the recesses of the soul and heart were as inscrutable then as in the dawn of the world, and a new civilization rolled on, accomplishing much and achieving everything from a practical and material point of view, while leaving the higher attributes of nature no more known than before. The doctrine of the survival of

the fittest in a thousand varied forms was growing to be the belief, avowed or unavowed, of a vast multitude of the people, and in vain the whole-souled ministers of religion, of whom many remained, strove to arrest the flood, to bring back the mind and heart to the simpler faith and reliance of the past. This, however, was becoming anachronistic and incongruous, and one by one their voices and precepts died away in barrenness and oblivion.

The greatest powers—and these were great before, but now immeasurably more so—were the judiciary and the press. In every crisis of the country's history they had formed a bulwark and barrier against a retrogressive tendency, and were ever an encouragement to amelioration and progress. The one a steadfast bulwark, the other a great crusading force, together they formed the strongest protection to society. The judiciary had ever remained the purest branch of the government of the country. It had had unworthy members, but they were very few in comparison with the great number whose strength,

efficiency, and courage had time and again saved the state and society. The political development after the Spanish-American War had led to many reforms in the judiciary. For the most part the positions were made appointive instead of elective, and those which remained elective were made so for a long period of years, so that its members felt themselves absolutely independent of the popular will, and even when their tenure of office was doubtful and insecure they had ever sought justice and equity, so now they were absolutely independent and fearless, and almost invariably intelligent and highly trained, forming the central point and foundation stone of the political and economic life of the country. The laws, which had so long been diverse and chaotic, different in different states, became gradually welded into a more harmonious whole. The first and most obvious, regulating marriage and divorce, bankruptcy and civil procedure, laws affecting commercial transactions, together with most branches of criminal law,

were harmonized into practical uniformity throughout the United States. It was this bulwark which prevented the combination and consolidation of wealth, which had grown so universal, from becoming too absolutely oppressive on the people at large, which kept society in a workable condition, and which by its decisions and rulings fostered the more general distribution of wealth, and protected the individual or the minority of those in a great corporation from oppression. It was also the judiciary which on the other hand protected the great organized industries from wanton attacks by the reckless demagogues and unscrupulous advocates of socialism. It was, in short, the judiciary which held and maintained the balances of social and economic justice, which not only rendered lives safe and property secure, but which prevented gross oppression as well as seditious uprisings. It practically held the balance of power during these periods, and while impotent to arrest the tendency of the age it prevented the worst features from

operating too harshly, and restrained power, arrogance, and wealth on the one hand, while it quelled insubordination and violence on the other. It was the preserver of life, property, and rights then as before, the more needed as the conditions of life were radiating in such different directions and a violent upheaval could only be averted by its strong and imperious mediation.

Next to the judiciary the press was the great mainstay of society. It had not the high character of the judiciary, and it was widely different in methods. Some of its representatives were ignorant and unprincipled, pandering to the idle discontent of the vicious classes, or belonging body and soul to oppressive machines, corporations, and monopolies, but these were, on the whole, the exception. The main idea and governing principle were the maintenance of the existing order of things, the preservation of established rights, and the encouragement of progress in all directions. Often expounded by talented and brilliant men before this period, it had drawn to

itself a great deal of the ability of the country, and the highest order of talent is more apt to exert itself in an abstract sense than to pander to any material aim. Its fire, energy, and great inquisitiveness rendered it disagreeable and even offensive, but to the country at large these very qualities were productive of vast good. No tyranny felt secure from its argus eyes, and wealth felt that it could not buy more than an inconsiderable and worthless protection of its representatives. Its activity and zeal led it to examine and study every phase of life, to ferret out every possibility, and to publish every fact or incident out of the absolute routine of daily existence. No conspiracy against the established order of things could exist without being sought out and denounced. No combination of wealth could be formed for any oppressive measure of finance or commerce without its discovery and condemnation. It was constantly studying, investigating, and crusading—in the main on the side of the poor and oppressed against the rich and

oppressors ; but equity it speedily recognized, and abandoned the unjust poor to recognize the just who were rich. It was on the side of fairness and fair play as it understood them, and if its overwhelming energy, activity, and curiosity were productive of enormous inconvenience and trouble, they were also productive of much more good. As it understood justice and right it maintained and advocated them. As it understood lawlessness and crime it ferreted them out and aided in their punishment. And the sum total of its work was vastly toward the good. Its general principle was the maintenance of the established order of things, without which, indeed, it could scarcely hope to exist or thrive. The encouragement of all progress and improvement, whether economic, scientific, or material, and the denouncement of all that was subversive of organized society, rendered it a fit supplement to the judiciary ; the two together favored restraining or advancing tendencies of civilization on equal and just lines and for the general good as they understood it.

The emigration, which for so long a period of time in the early part of the history of the country was composed of men of high character, courage, and energy, had for some time gradually deteriorated, until the larger proportion was composed of men of the Eastern or Slavonic type, not desirable in their own country and very much less so in the United States. Many were of Semitic origin, and all these classes formed a mass which it was impossible to assimilate with the original stock which founded the United States.

Furthermore, the acquisition of colonies had brought within the territory of the United States an equally undesirable class of men,—natives of the half-blood, and with a very thin veneer of civilization, merely enough under the lax laws prevailing to allow them to acquire citizenship. In addition to these elements, which had become very numerous, there were the negroes, who at this time comprised about one eighth of the population. There was thus from all these sources a very large and very ignorant population

of comparatively recent civilization, of moral ideas and principles much more elastic and easy than were consistent with any form of good government. They rarely attained to high places in politics or trade, but occupied many of the minor positions, aggravating the evil tendencies of the time, and retarding the good which the better elements were gradually endeavoring to work out from the new and involved problems of the age. They were the ready and easy tools alike of unscrupulous political leaders, and formed at the same time humble instruments to be used by the great manufacturing and trade powers to the detriment of native American workers. They intensified the prevailing tendency toward machine life, and rendered all the struggles toward individualism and independence the more difficult. But if they were readily used for one purpose, on the other hand they formed a solid and valuable mass when better tendencies of government and social life came to prevail. They performed much of the labor of all kinds in the country and city which

the American was less and less inclined to attempt, while they occupied very largely the lower domain of the domestic service, and later, during the war which was to ensue, as had been the case in the Civil and Spanish wars, they, and the negroes especially, formed a most effective fighting force when led by competent white officers.

Aside from this large and relatively distinct element, the great mass of the people had been welded into a homogeneity not known before. A well defined American character had been formed, differentiating so much from others as to make a distinct race. It had little in common with the English excepting the same tongue, and partook of the qualities of the Celtic race, the Teutonic, and the French to an almost equal degree with those of the English, modified by the effects of life and climatic conditions, and forming by the intermixture of blood a racially distinct people. The nation had grown so great in numbers, in power, and in wealth as to excite the envy of the rest of the world,

and pride, which had always been a strong characteristic, was augmented by their marvellous achievements until they practically stood isolated from the rest of the world, and were feared and disliked in an equal degree.

CHAPTER XI

APOTHEOSIS OF THE UNITED STATES—THE GREAT WAR

THE respect shown to the nation, the deference to the individuals when abroad, flattered their vanity and augmented yet more their pride. It was *civis Romanus sum*, and this conquering and arrogant spirit was apt to promote friction and arouse deep-seated opposition in foreigners. All the tact of a series of good administrations, all the skill of the diplomatic corps, were required to soothe international susceptibilities and restrain national pride. For many years these efforts were successful and peace reigned throughout the world.

The most dangerous point of contact with foreign powers was in the colonies. Far from the home government, ruled by semi-independent officials, and in close

contiguity with the possessions of other nations, these formed an ever-increasing source of trouble and difficulty. It became a question of time only when the political and commercial interests of all these dependencies belonging to different and jealous powers would become irretrievably involved and when the home governments would become committed by the acts or omissions of their too zealous agents. This was realized, but by the other great colonial powers sooner and more fully than by the United States, and preparations were accordingly made to meet the impending crisis.

The situation had become more and more strained and the two great nations owning vast colonies and possessions near those of the United States in the Far East had for some time been preparing for the armed collision which seem inevitable. Confident in their position, assured of the neutrality of the other powers, and bound by strong alliances, they were in a situation to take a firm and unyielding stand in regard to the commercial

relations of the adjacent colonies; while the United States, proud of its long years of prosperity, with the arrogance of wealth and its memory of unbroken series of successes in war, was careless of the consequences and pushed matters to an extreme, although a little patience, conciliatory disposition, and self-restraint might have obviated the great war which was to ensue.

Diplomacy had done much and diplomacy could do more, for the diplomatic service of the United States, while inferior in its organization and in the average capacity of its representatives to that of some other great powers, was vastly superior to what it had been, and contained among its members several men of the highest ability, of broad experience, and great training. It was, however, not left a free hand; the curse of politics at home and the exigency of party, together with the pressure of the great masses, who were ever clamorous for excitement and adventure, and who, having nothing to lose and everything to gain, were indifferent to peace if not anxious to hurry the country

into war, forced its hand, and in spite of repeated warnings, in spite of the knowledge of the past and the fact that well informed men, not only in the diplomatic service, but in the United States, knew that these nations had for years been preparing for a possible struggle, war was declared, and the United States alone proudly confronted Russia and Germany. The navy of the United States, which had been largely increased since the Spanish War, was faithful to its traditions of efficiency, and fought a series of battles, the heroism of which had never been excelled. The motto of Lawrence—"Never give up the ship"—was the motto of all, and vessel after vessel went down with the proud flag of the United States flying. But, outnumbered three to one, heroism and efficiency could avail but little, and of the splendid navy but a few scattered ships were left in the estuaries and rivers protected by the guns of the forts.

Within three months from the outbreak of the war the United States had lost her colonies, and the great seaboard cities of

the country proper were in the hands of the enemy. Modern warfare had become more than ever essentially and primarily a question of money, and the principal sea-coast cities instead of being bombarded were simply bonded. The richest cities of the world, ancient or modern, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, were obliged to pay stupendous sums of money to save themselves from destruction. As soon as the command of the sea had been secured, sufficient troops had been brought over to garrison the cities and occupy the immediately adjacent country, but it was idle to hope to invade so vast a territory as that of the United States or to confront the army of three million men of the same courage, patriotism, and devotion, even if untrained in the arts of war, as had conquered in the Revolution, the Civil War, and the lesser wars of the country. This was the position of affairs which lasted for several years, and the end did not seem in sight, for the United States was too proud to sue for peace on any terms which the

victors were willing to grant. Holding all the vast territory except the seaboard cities, the people were amply provided with the necessities of life,—food, clothing, armament, and equipment,—while the enemy, holding the sea and the largest cities, had no difficulty on their part in securing supplies of all kinds, and were temporarily enriched by the vast sums which they had extorted from the country.

Business of course had been paralyzed. There was no foreign commerce, and that of the interior was in the main what was required by the necessities of the occasion. Manufacturing had, for the most part, come to a standstill. The floating capital as well as the valuable securities were in the hands of the enemy. There was no outlet for surplus products, no exchange for commodities, and the entire country was reverting to the condition centuries previous. The situation had become intolerable, and the whole energy and intelligence of the country were aroused to put an end to it, although still refusing to accept humiliating peace. The

centre of government had been removed to St. Louis, and the administration was in the hands of a strong President and Cabinet. The army had been purified from politics, and the war had developed brilliant commanders and efficient officers. In the winter of the third year—an unusually severe one—a combined attack was made on the northern seaports in the possession of the enemy and upon such of their ships as could be reached on the ice—emulating thus the capture of the Dutch fleet by the French Dragoons. It was successful. The armies in front of New York and Boston succeeded after a terrible loss of life in carrying by assault the fortifications erected by the enemy and in recapturing the cities. Furthermore, they had reached some of the smaller ships and destroyed them, while a persistent bombardment from the captured forts either sunk or drove away the larger war vessels in the outer harbors. Baltimore, New Orleans, and other cities in turn fell into the hands of the Americans, and the enemy, tired of so obstinate a war, of the

sacrifice entailed, and solaced by the vast sums which they collected, sailed away, never to return. Peace was soon after made, the United States keeping its territory intact and relinquishing its colonies, which it was no longer able to defend and of which the people had become heartily tired.

The war was ended, but the country was in a sad condition,—poor and disorganized; the government returned to Washington and set itself to build up again the fortunes of the nation which had been so great in prosperity, and had shown a still greater heroism in misfortune. The political feature was comparatively easy, the commercial and industrial one more difficult. Capital instead of being abundant was scarce. Manufacturers had in great part failed. The railroads had suffered from lack of money, lack of use, and general neglect. Such industries alone as ministered to the wants of the vast army had thriven. But the soil was as productive as ever. Men were as numerous; and chastened by misfortune were

in a better frame of mind to renew their work than ever before. The national character had been vastly improved. The great tendency of the previous half-century towards excessive consolidation and centralization had been defeated. Individualism had emerged triumphant, and, with individualism, a future stable government for the country.

Trusts, monopolies, and corporations had been shattered into nothingness and fallen like a pack of cards in the midst of the great national disaster. The seeming wealth thus accumulated had vanished, and the reversion of all, from a corporation to the individual, as the reversion of wealth to the soil, stood out triumphant.

CHAPTER XII

CO-OPERATION

THE system during the ensuing elections was radically changed. There were no party candidates, the confusion arising from every one voting for whom his fancy dictated being obviated by a law requiring a certain number of votes to entitle any man to run for office. The ballot, which had been theoretically improved, was now perfected by mechanical contrivance, and for the first time was put into operation in this form, insuring also secrecy and accuracy. The trying times had taught men to place a better value on those among them of true worth, and a class of men entirely different from their predecessors was elected to office. The national disasters had been so severely felt, so much brought home to each individual, that he realized that in order to

attain the prime object of government he must put efficient men in power, and not those from whom he could expect some petty office, some assistance, or some benefit to himself or friends. It was disinterestedness—but not the abstract quality, which would be more than human nature is capable of. It was simply the disinterestedness of selfishness, but it was thoroughly realized, and well carried out. The old laws were changed and new laws were enacted, in all of which the keynote was separatism and individualism. Combinations and consolidations could not be forbidden, but periodical publication was required to show minutely all the operations conducted by them. The system of consenting by vote or otherwise was so modified that the tyranny of the majority was destroyed, and the power of the minority and of the individual vastly increased.

But the laws, as always, were merely expression of public opinion, and the fact that they were so readily made, and improvements so eagerly adopted, was the

strongest evidence of the public demand. This was so universally felt that even the former trust magnates, owning great properties, appreciated the change in public feeling; only the most hardened clinging to their former ideas and views. They had seen how powerless they were in times of disaster; how dependent they were upon the individual man, whom they had regarded as a mere spoke in a wheel, or piece of machinery of which they were the controlling power; and the more intelligent were glad to welcome the new change, confident that it would eventually prove better for themselves, and certainly assure a more peaceful future for their descendants.

The idea of association in profits, of co-operation in all business, which had been dimly discerned before and in some instances tried, was energetically and vigorously carried out. Its success was assured almost from the first, and proved far greater than any one had anticipated. The individual, even with a minute share of the profits in an enterprise,

worked with greater skill and perseverance than when a mere separate item of machinery, which could be replaced when worn out, and which had no intelligent part in the great enterprise. The smallest participation gave every man a voice, and in the primaries new talents were being developed, new characteristics shown, to the benefit and profit of all ; and the largest shareholders and controlling powers, who had been previously the autocratic heads of vast concerns, found that they profited no less, while bestowing advantages where nature intended them to fall.

A succession of good crops gave the country an excellent start on its new path, while, under the new system, industry revived in a wonderful manner and transportation was more profitable, more efficient than ever before. As interior commerce and industry revived, so exterior commerce assumed new life. The commercial navy of the United States grew rapidly and assumed proportions it had never attained before, while the armed

navy was improved and gradually reconstructed until in number, power, and efficiency the navy of the United States was second to none.

The lessons which the war had taught the army were equally severe, and it was placed upon a basis where intelligence, education, and capacity were the only stepping-stones to preferment, and where graduation from West Point was, except in rare cases of distinguished merit and ability, a prerequisite to a command in the army. Indeed education throughout, in every phase or condition of life, had been recognized as the one essential to success—not the half-halting and very partial education of the generation previous, but a broader education of training men for the battles of life, whether civil or military.

Among the vast corporations still existing at this time, and which had relatively suffered less from the effects of the war, were naturally those in the interior of the country, and among the many was the Illinois Central Railroad. Quick to appreciate the entire upheaval of the social

and economic condition, and having previously tried to some extent the co-operative plan, it now put it into force in a methodical and systematic manner. From the president down to the firemen and the track-walkers, every one was interested in varying proportions in the prosperity of the railroad. Instead of salaries they were entitled to a fixed proportion of the net earnings. In the case of firemen and workmen there was even attached to this a certain guaranty of a fixed sum, in order that the temporary vicissitudes of the road should not deprive them or their families of absolute necessities. Even this, however, was soon found to be unnecessary, and thrift was inculcated and grew to be a prominent virtue. The result soon demonstrated beyond peradventure that it was by far the most successful way of operating a railroad. Each official and person connected with it, as well as their friends, were active agents for it; and in the competition with the other lines they were anxious to secure, and through their strong personal interest

did secure, a larger proportion of the traffic of the districts through which it passed. Furthermore, the expenses were very materially lessened; each man felt that he was engaged in operating his own property and was anxious to do it as economically as possible. The saving in the cost of transportation was very great. The repairs necessary to the road were more economically done, and by the care exercised in running the trains the rails, ties, bridges, and roadbed lasted much longer. At the end of the first six months the balance-sheet of the company showed a profit which had been unknown before the war, in spite of the naturally depressed condition of business. The interest of the president and higher officials was as great as their large salaries had been, and the share in the profits of the lower employees was almost in every instance greater than the salaries or wages had been. In the second six months this was more notably the case, and the progressive ratio was steadily kept up during the ensuing years. The success of this

experiment led to its adoption by the other railroads in the country until it became universal. Contemporaneously with the first experiment of the Illinois Central, the Federal Steel Co. adopted the co-operative system. The success in this case was almost as great as in that of the Illinois Central Railroad, although of slower growth. Its example was speedily followed by other manufacturing concerns with a greater or less degree of success.

In some instances the industries had been so prostrated that the recovery was slow and uncertain, and in many cases the men in control were by no means suitable to conducting the enterprise. Here, however, the system showed its far-reaching and excellent effects. In the general assemblies and meetings free speech and discussion ensued. New methods were advocated, ideas were interchanged, and new features brought forward. Men who displayed unusual familiarity with the business, and who showed a superior capacity in education, were elected to the higher offices, and the industry, staggering

under the depressed condition of affairs and poor management, gradually emerged from this condition and became prosperous and remunerative.

In the case of farming, the system was not necessary in its rigorous construction. From those trusts into which the farming interests had fallen, they reverted to separate and small holdings and maintained co-operative stores of all kinds. In this way each farmer was absolutely independent, while deriving all the advantages of purchasing his supplies at these co-operative stores, and of disposing of his produce through co-operative societies, with agents for distribution in his district. In the large cities more difficulty was experienced, and the innovation was not regarded with much favor; but a large trust company and a formerly prosperous banking house having adopted it and proving its practical success, other similar institutions were not slow to follow, while the great stores took it up perhaps with less difficulty than was the case with any of the other forms of industry. It thus gradually

became universal throughout the country, and every man had a more or less active stake in some form of enterprise, the profits of which his intelligence and energy could augment, while neglect and incompetence on his part resulted in his dropping out entirely and yielding his place to those better fitted for the work.

In so great an evolution it was evident that the time had arrived when it was necessary for men to find the positions and occupations best adapted to their talents. Formerly, accident, chance, or mistaken inclination had thrown them into certain channels. Under the new system the workers' taste and abundant interest in the enterprise on which depended subsistence either brought out their talents or showed that they were ill adapted for this particular class of work. It was necessary in these cases for the individual to seek other fields, and for the managers of the enterprise to seek other employees. This process of sorting out and arranging necessarily entailed some suffering and hardship, which could not but last for some

time. It was, however, inevitable, and a benefit eventually to the individual as well as to the nation at large, and generally resulted in not only appropriate and congenial occupations for every one, but in a vast improvement in the working of all forms of enterprise and industry.

CHAPTER XIII

THE REGENERATED NATION

ONLY less momentous than the political and economic changes which the country had experienced, was the social evolution. This influenced, and was influenced by, the change in economic conditions. If there had not been previous to the war social trusts, monopolies, and corporations, there had existed something very similar, less well defined, but, if possible, more tyrannical and arrogant. There always had been a vast amount of charity, but it was essentially charity, and the recipients felt it as such, and not as brotherhood. The changed conditions, the chastening effects of the cruel disasters of the war had made it possible for people to see that a better social condition had become necessary if the country were to live, and they were in a frame of mind to earnestly carry out what seemed

most feasible and best. The change took place slowly, more slowly than the political and economic change, but in the end it was no less thorough. The development of individualism in business led to the development of individualism and independence in society. Each citizen of the nation felt that the social fabric was interdependent, and that the most prosperous, most wealthy, and most intelligent might, in some measure, become dependent upon the weak. This led to a better feeling among all classes. In the economic life the owner, male or female, of any share in any enterprise had the equal right to rise at the assemblies and discuss any question pertaining to its management. He felt that this right belonged to him in the social life as well, and exercised it. It led to a different and very much better condition of society, while the inconveniences which the more old-fashioned and conservative people anticipated were readily obviated. People in fact were freer than ever to choose their associates. Those who were congenial through tastes,

education, intelligence, and wealth, or for any reason, could congregate together as much as desirable. The only difference was that they could not segregate themselves from the world at large. But this was a blessing, and not an evil ; for the occasional contact in business, or in the larger spheres of society, broadened the minds of the most reserved and exclusive. There was some good to be found in everybody and everything, and the more generous feelings which were engendered, the spread of charity, and the variety and brightness of life thus opened had gradually increased the sum of happiness of the community at large.

Aimless display and ostentation, which had been such marked characteristics of society hitherto, were gradually discouraged and discountenanced, and a more serious and intelligent tone came to prevail. There was perhaps as much real luxury, far more artistic and literary development, but the aimless exhibition of wealth greater than one's neighbors' seemed to have no purpose or aim. The real superiority, that of intellect and breeding,

was more and more appreciated and more and more cultivated. The possible first effects might have been considered somewhat pedantic, but that soon wore off under the effect of ridicule—always so strong with the American people—and left only the more solid advantages of superior education and attainments behind. In this, society, so called, endeavored to excel, as it had formerly with the lavish display of senseless and inartistic wealth, but these were necessarily open to competition from all sources, social prominence being now founded on a legitimate basis. It not only resulted in making society far more interesting, but it necessarily broadened it. It could be considered less exclusive in the arbitrary sense which had prevailed when the only criterion was wealth, but it was more exclusive in the requirements of education and intelligence, far more productive of the nobler attributes of life.

Among the better features of the social change was a development of women's talents in medicine, literary work, and

certain branches of scientific research, and, later, in the larger share of women in the politics, the industry, and commerce of the country. The co-operative system was especially adapted for availing of their peculiar abilities. In every form of industry there were always positions in which their quick intelligence, their intuitive faculties, and their ready adaptability could prove useful, while the more severe mental and physical labor, to which they were not so well suited, reverted naturally to the men. In everything that appertained to farming they were especially useful ; in keeping the accounts, tabulating returns, and balancing the dealings at the co-operative stores and agencies with the income and outgo of the business. In railroad and telegraphic enterprises their field was far wider. A large part of the work was allotted to them, and very successfully performed. In banking and financial matters their usefulness was less apparent, but in manufacturing industries they accomplished more than half the work.

The system, successful, even in its

experimental state, with both men and women, had shown various defects and shortcomings, but these were gradually remedied. The greatest, of course, was with the co-operative share of the individual, who represented his proportion either of (first) capital, (second) brains, (third) manual labor, or a combination of two or all of these. Furthermore, it was necessary, especially in the case of women, to regulate the interest so that it should not entirely cease in case of disability or sickness, and in the case of old and infirm men, who had formerly had an interest, that it should not at once end. This was gradually arranged by dividing the shares into active and passive co-operative shares, capital shares, and manual or intellectual labor shares, so that practically each adult individual in the United States became possessed of one or more of such shares. It was naturally many years, indeed many decades, before the system reached perfection and worked in absolute harmony, but from the first it had shown its practicability, and success was not slow in following.

The tendency which had been so overwhelmingly towards the flow of population to the cities necessarily received by the war itself, in the destruction of these great centres, a serious setback, and in the regeneration of the country which followed, the wiser statesmen, the more far-seeing men, exerted themselves in every way to permanently arrest the former tendency, and encourage and foster a reversion of life to the country, or at least to the suburban districts. Wise legislation in the matter of taxation, exemption, and privilege did much to foster this, but still more the great development of the means of intercommunication which had taken place during the last generation. Wireless telegraphy, a dim experiment at the end of the nineteenth century, had become a practical reality. Telephoning, being carried on without wires and without the cumbrous use of a central office, became still more prevalent. Rapid transit, which had already made great strides, was still more perfected, and by the use of compressed air as a motive power, and

by great economy in construction, every individual of even the most modest means could have and operate a conveyance of his own which travelled with a rapidity formerly only attained by railroad trains. All this rendered it possible to live in the country at considerable distances from the city, and yet transact business there, either by wire, by telephone, graphophone, or in person. Living on his farm at Peekskill or Plainfield, a gentleman could reach New York in less time than it took to go from Harlem twenty years previous. The result of this and the effects on the health of the people were greater than ever. Sanitary science had improved with all else during the past generation, and this, with the more healthy country life which a greater and greater number of people were enjoying, lessened the ratio of sickness and the proportion of deaths. It became no unusual thing for a man to attain one hundred years of age, and active and energetic men of eighty years were by no means infrequently met with.

CHAPTER XIV

UNIVERSAL PROSPERITY

AS on the 4th of July, 1776, the United States first proclaimed the principle of liberty and equality before the law, and eight years of heroic conflict finally resulted in the triumph of the principles they so boldly asserted to the enslaved peoples of the then civilized world, so, a century and half later, the United States again enunciated the principles of industrial and commercial freedom. As, before, it had shattered the power built up by centuries of privilege founded on the position of what then constituted wealth, viz., landed property, so now it set the example in freeing the people from the more subtle, but not less onerous, privileges attaching to the control of personal property.

All the benefits and advantages of the

concentration of capital had been availed of by its creators, and could not but be appreciated by those who suffered most from its effects. Certainly, everything was cheapened, and provided the individual was possessed of a small income all the necessities, and most of the luxuries, of life were within his reach. But there arose the difficulty: if, with given means, it was possible to procure comfort and well-being, it became more and more difficult to acquire those means. The various forms of enterprise and industry throughout the country being consolidated into the hands of a small set of men, life itself was practically controlled by these little oligarchies, and access to these fountains, not alone of prosperity and wealth, but of simple existence, became more and more difficult.

Only since this last and greatest war, in which the United States had been engaged, did the solution become apparent. The vast system of co-operation, gradually more and more perfected, enabled any one, whatever his talents, first to secure



some interest however minute ; and, next, having secured that interest and a percentage in the profits, to exert his powers and his abilities, manual and mental, to the furtherance of the main aim. Being relatively in the same class with his fellow-workers, whether their share was vastly greater or consisted of the smallest allotment, all aims tended toward a common object, and all striving to that end, freely electing to the executive positions men whom they thought most capable and who could be entrusted with what was practically their future, the issue was, as far as human foresight and prescience could foresee, destined to be successful. All the obstacles of nature and foreign competition were unavoidable, and constituted merely incentives to greater efforts. With a fertile soil and a vast expanse of territory, and the inherited traits of energy, resourcefulness, and perseverance, it was inevitable that general success should crown the efforts in the various fields of endeavor. Failures, of course, were numerous enough, owing to refractory nature, foreign competition,

and mismanagement. The first could be corrected by patience and energy, the second by skill and persistence, and the last was readily remedied by the changes so easily effected under the new system.

Perhaps the most notable change in the life and condition of the people was that, instead of an increase of luxury, there was rather a decrease. The seriousness of life, the far greater equality, and the broader scope for individualism all tended to make men less desirous of factitious advantages, or of display and show, and more keenly alive to the pre-eminence of worth and intelligence. Art, literature, and science flourished as never before. Even ostentation and the exhibition of wealth was unpopular and unadmired, and, being so, was not indulged in. The whole trend of this new civilization was the development of intelligence and the appreciation of the higher intellectual characteristics of man. Every one having a direct personal interest, and being able to make his individuality felt, cultivated and exerted it to the utmost, and brought up

or instructed his children with the same views, with the consequence that the age might well have been called the age of intelligence. It might be supposed that this system would lead to the neglect of the physical attributes of man, and that certainly was the greatest danger, but, taught by centuries of experience, and with the advance of medical science, physical well-being was by no means neglected. Aside from the vast body of workers whose sphere lay in the open air, the other large mass who, of necessity, were obliged to lead more sedentary lives found that by acting in union, with a common object and purpose, work was achieved far more thoroughly and completely, and in a much shorter space of time than in the old chaotic manner. With this there was ample time for the cultivation of out-of-door exercises and amusements. These, in themselves, came to constitute practically industries. The cities were beautified, their suburbs laid out in parks and gardens, botanical and zoölogical, excellent roads were constructed

everywhere, even in the wildest and most remote parts of the country, new forms of games were introduced, hunting was cultivated in carefully managed preserves, riding and driving were very general, and as the nation worked as it had never worked before, so it played as it had never played before.

An old man was riding through the streets of the city, where the air was as clear as in the country; where the roadway was of immaculate stone; where a swift and noiseless vehicle transported him through sections adorned by buildings of faultless architecture; where art galleries and public libraries formed perpetual monuments, and in a brief space of time—while he glanced over the latest review—he was transported to the country, in the midst of the beauties and charms of nature.

Here, descending from the conveyance, he wandered through magnificent parks where half-tamed animals were cropping the sward in carefully kept enclosures, while in a neighboring field youths were

engaged in a variety of games. He walked onward by the shores of a lake dotted with pleasure-boats. He stopped a moment to gaze at a course where the youths lately from the counting-houses and shops were engaged in an animated game of polo. Seated in an arbor, he watched these various scenes, like, yet dissimilar to, what he had known, as he compared the happy faces before him with the attenuated figures of a generation before, until the descending sun put a stop to the variety of amusements around him. Strolling onward to a large opening in the park, he hailed an electric vehicle, and was quickly conveyed out to the country-seat of his grandson, some forty miles away. Here a boating party had just returned from an expedition, and he listened to the account of an impromptu regatta in which they had been engaged. After dinner,—not a sumptuous and elaborate feast, but a simple and delectable repast,—in the summer evening he sat listening to the younger generation discussing their hopes and fears, amusements

and occupations. There seemed to him none of the anxiety and distress which pierced even the wildest attempts at gayety which he remembered in his youth, but a serene confidence and optimism he had never known, and willingness and desire for work, and the belief, or rather the conviction, that, consciously or unconsciously, toil would receive its just reward.

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THE END

